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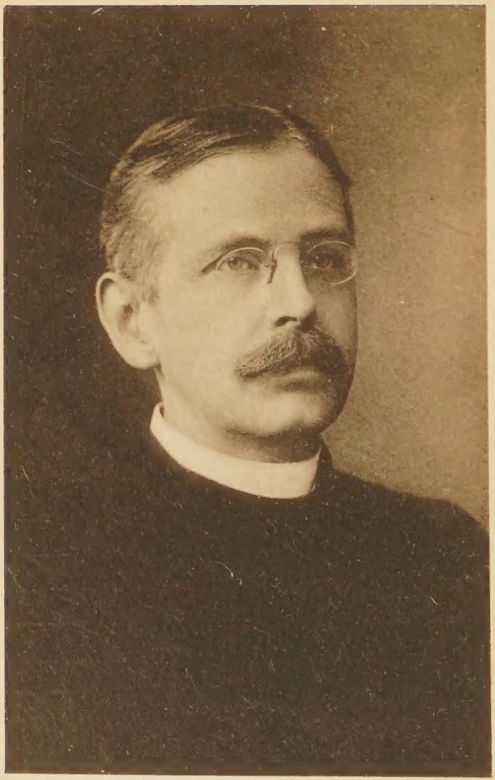

DEVOTIONAL INTRODUCTIONS

Based chiefly upon the Altar Scriptures for the various Sundays of the Christian Year

By the

Rev. Edward William Worthington

Priest

WITH

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

By

The Rt. Rev. George Worthington, D.D., LL.D.

Bishop of Nebraska

AND

AN APPRECIATION

By

The Rt. Rev. William Andrew Leonard, D.D.

Bishop of Ohio

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DEDICATED

TO THE BELOVED MEMORY OF HIM BY WHOM
THESE PAPERS WERE WRITTEN.

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"Such is the death of the Christian, upheld by his faith in the resurrection: not the direful calamity which the world pictures, but the breaking up of an earthly camp to be exchanged for the mansions of the Father's house; the loosening of the cable for the soul's joyful voyage home."

AN APPRECIATION.

I HAVE been requested to act with the Bishop of Nebraska in preparing a "Foreword" that may in some small degree throw light on the character and service of the author of these valuable spiritual reflections. Such a character and such a service are in themselves monumental. They cannot cease in their influences and effects, though the human form be invisible to us, and though the active ministrations on earth are ended. Such a life as that of Edward William Worthington lives in other lives, and spreads its sweet spiritual influence far and near in many characters that have been modelled and moulded by his instructions and his power. Such a service as he was permitted to render for God and for man, is perennial and eternal in its effects. For "his prayers and alms," his devotions, and his intercessions, his labors, and his counsels "go up before God" continually, and are not forgotten of our Father, nor are they useless for the souls blessed through his holy ministrations. This is the "memorial" of our

brother and friend, and we cherish it as we cherish him in heart and mind.

But this volume is prepared and sent forth that it may be to us all a reminder of what he thought, and felt, and taught. And as in the past these "antiphons" have proved uplifting to many, so our hope and belief is, that as the years go on, they will guide and direct the religious impulses of all who shall be privileged to peruse and study them. These devotional papers were written in the quiet study of Grace Church, Cleveland, Ohio. They came out of the rich depths of the author's soul. They are reflections from the Spirit of God, and are again flashed forth, for the blessing of others. They first appeared in *The Living Church* over the signature of "B"—at Septuagesima, 1905, and continued regularly each week until the Fourth Sunday after Easter, 1906. He died on Easter Day. Therefore the last four papers came to us as it were from the hand and heart that were still; so that he being dead, yet spake to us of the things that pertain to the Risen Christ. Mr. Worthington had been a contributor to the editorial columns of *The Living Church* for several years; and he also wrote and published a number of valuable monographs on the various offices of the Church.

The impulse that urges me at this time is to manifest somewhat of the rich and rare qualities of his nature and his work, out of which these meditations have sprung. From a near and very affectionate intimacy I can speak feelingly. He was to me during nearly seventeen years the close and confidential adviser and helper. No shadow of hesitation ever crossed our relationship. I could rely absolutely upon his honor in these confidences; and though we did not always agree as to policies and plans, yet there could not be found a more loyal counsellor. His judgments were calm and clear: his grasp of eternal verities and of the substantial faith of the Church of God was firm and unfaltering: his rare spiritual perception was clear and undimmed: so that these qualities made his advice unquestionably valuable.

Added to these conditions, was his accuracy as to facts and precedents growing out of a long training. For five years he was private secretary to the Bishop of Connecticut. He was for more than ten years the Secretary of the Convention of our Diocese. For more than eighteen years he was an Assistant Secretary of the General Convention. For seventeen years he was a member of the Standing Committee of our Diocese, and a long-time Deputy to the

General Convention from Ohio. His brethren of this Diocese trusted him and believed in him and loved him, one and all. And no matter how widely they may have differed from him in doctrine or in practice, he was, without invidious statement the most popular Presbyter in this jurisdiction.

Mr. Worthington was a very holy man. Consecrated to the Priesthood, he never forgot his high calling. It was not professional nor perfunctory, but real and sacred, and it was the essence of his being. As a theologian he was a sound High Anglican, instructed by that great master, the late Bishop Williams of Connecticut. He taught what this Church held and believed, and could give a clear reason for his teachings. There was nothing mystical or material in this theology. It was coherent, logical, scriptural, catholic. It was not tinctured with Roman theories, nor with Zwinglianism. But it was the clean, sound, unalterable doctrine of Apostolic utterance and Nicene announcements. On such a friend and theologian I leaned with thankful regard and appreciation.

Of his work in Grace Parish it is difficult to speak because that work was so large, and long, and rich. He was a model Parish Priest. Faithful to every monot-

onous detail of administration, tireless in his "goings out and comings in," his feet were moving daily through hospital wards, into the humble dwellings of the poor, among the sorrowing ones of earth, with the fallen and sinning, by the side of the sick and troubled. How the people loved him, how they looked up into his sweet, benevolent face; how they caught hope and courage from his gentle voice; how they were blessed, comforted, saved through Christ, by his priestly endeavors! God knows all about it, and so do those many souls whom he has shepherded. So when he came to die, it was without fear; yea, it was with a song in his soul, and a smile on his lips. Nourished by the Bread of Christ's precious Sacrament, his viaticum was the strong staff of the Divine Presence; and so he went down into the valley of shadows, which became for him very soon the illumined way of Light and Life.

Before he left us, he made this act of Faith. "I die," he said, "in the communion of this true Branch of Christ's Church Catholic. I hold firmly to the Creeds, to the indefectible fact of the Christ born of a pure Virgin; and the Christ risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven: my Lord and Saviour."

It was a "sure testimony," because "he knew whereof he believed." His soul entered into the larger Life, "very early" on Easter morning. And we are lovingly assured of his resurrection at the last Great Day. His dear brothers in the priestly office gathered together in Grace Church, Cleveland, on the morning of his burial, and after all had received the Holy Communion at the Altar he had so lovingly served, their expression of reverent esteem and affectionate appreciation was full, sincere, and tender.

For such a life we thank our God, and pray that we may be partakers of the abundant grace that sustained him here day by day, and gave him at the end of his service, an unshaken and satisfactory confidence.

WILLIAM ANDREW LEONARD.

Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland, Ohio,
July 15, 1906.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

EDWARD WILLIAM WORTHINGTON was of New England ancestry. The family represented by two brothers, Nicholas and John, emigrated from Lancashire, England, to this country nearly three hundred years ago. The former found his first home in the colonies, at Saybrook, Connecticut; the latter in Maryland. Nicholas and his descendants are identified with the early history of Connecticut and Massachusetts. The great-grandfather of the subject of this sketch was a captain in the Revolutionary War, and, after valiant service, died at an advanced age and was buried at Lenox, Massachusetts. His grandfather was a pioneer Churchman in western New York, and his father, Gad B. Worthington, was for many years Senior Warden of St. James' Church, Batavia, New York, and prominently connected with the activities and institutions of the diocese during the episcopates of Bishops De Lancey and Coxe.

Edward William was born at Batavia, New York, May 10, 1854, and was reared in a home where Christian influences surrounded him. His early education was at

Cary School, Oakfield, and Batavia High School. One of his youthful companions, now a priest in the Church, writes of this period: "Will and I were inseparable as boys, and I have retained my affection for him through all these years. Even as a lad he was a remarkable character. I was as well acquainted with him as one boy could be with another, and yet I never knew him to do or say a wrong or unmanly thing. His life was as successful in the highest sense of the word as a human life could be. I am as proud of it as if he were one of my own blood." He graduated with honors at Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., B.A. 1875, M.A. 1878. From a letter received soon after his death, written by one of his college professors, this quotation may be made: "In his college days I felt very close to him, and I can recall nothing on his part with the least thought of regret. Then in after years I saw less of him, but I knew of his work as priest and as secretary and in other official ways, and at each General Convention I was brought into very close relations with him again. To remember him is a blessing." His theological education was received at Berkeley Divinity School, Middletown, Conn., where he was greatly favored by daily companionship with Bishop John

Williams, as a member of his household and acting as his secretary for several years. To this relationship may be largely attributed his accurate thought and expression in matters theological. He was ordained deacon in Holy Trinity Church, Middletown, by Bishop Williams, May 29, 1878, and was placed in charge of St. John's Church, Yalesville, Conn., retaining his position as secretary to the Bishop and sitting as a learner at the feet of that profound Doctor in Divinity and thereby continuing his theological training beyond the three years' course in "The School of Prophets" from which had graduated. From 1879 to 1882, he was the rector of Christ Church, West Haven, Conn. He married Eleanor Lobdell, the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Lobdell, late rector of Trinity Church, Buffalo, N. Y., on June 17, 1880, and she survives him. Five children were born to them, and one only had entered into paradise before her father, Agnes Seabury, who died March 2, 1900. Eleanor, Edward Lobdell, Donald, and Dorothy, received the priceless legacy of holy example in the saintly life of a parent now passed into the skies.

In 1882, in order to be near his venerable father, he accepted a call to St. John's Church, Mount Morris, New York, and re-

mained as rector of that parish until 1887. In these several parishes where he labored in the same spirit of devotion that characterized his pastoral work in Cleveland, there are many who in tender love delight to testify to his helpfulness and his entire consecration. Upon leaving Mount Morris he entered on his duties as the rector of Grace Church, Cleveland, Ohio, where he faithfully labored for eighteen years. The testimony of those most familiar with his unwearied pastoral service, is given in the following resolutions:

"Whereas, In the death of our beloved rector, the Reverend Edward William Worthington, the Vestry and the people of Grace Parish and countless needy ones throughout the city have suffered a loss too great to be at this time rightly estimated, having been bereaved of a loyal friend, an earnest counsellor and a loving spiritual adviser, be it hereby

"Resolved, That we, the Vestry of Grace Church, for ourselves and the congregation make by this instrument public acknowledgment of the great sorrow which has fallen over us all, and express our appreciation of the loving services, so cheerfully and ably performed, through good health and ill, for ourselves and our families dur-

ing the past eighteen years, by our late beloved rector; and be it

"Resolved, That Grace Parish has lost in him a rector who has brought to its noble history additional honor and distinction by reason of his beautiful character, scholarly attainments and distinguished ability; and that we extend to his widow and family an expression of our heartfelt sympathy in this sad bereavement; and be it further

"Resolved, That a copy of this instrument be conveyed to his widow and family, be published in the Church papers and be placed in the permanent records of the parish."

A brother presbyter writes that "during his residence and ministry in Cleveland, his influence has been enormous both with the clergy, and the laity; and it will be long before anyone can occupy a similar place in their hearts and lives. Not only was he the ideal priest, teacher, and pastor, but he was a man of marked administrative capacity and unusual executive ability. By immense labor he carried through to a splendid success the transfer of all the interests of Grace Church from the old to the new site, and placed the parish on a footing, financial and spiritual, which greatly enlarged its opportunities, and,

humanly speaking, would insure the permanence and prosperity of its work.

In the services of the sanctuary his manner was marked by great reverence and a strict observance of the rubrics of the Church.

There are two elements which always enter into the constitution of individual character, and which must qualify our judgment of its merits. These important constitutions are, first, natural endowments —what might be called the original forces of the person; and secondly, the circumstances where his power is to be felt. Neither natural gifts nor environment altogether make the man. They only show him forth. The real manufacture is in the amount of increase which his own effort gives to the natural gifts, and to the accidental advantage. Among those native energies which were possessed by the subject of this brief biographical sketch, and which those who knew him well, most highly prized, were a warm affectionateness of disposition and an innate integrity of heart. He was loyalty itself to any friend he loved, or to any cause which he had examined sufficiently to espouse. He abhorred self-seeking, and was never known to take one step, or put forth a claim, or ask preferment. Opportunities not seldom opened

before him for honorable advancement, but unless he recognized the divine Will and a Providential Leading, he declined to avail himself of them. He was a model of modest and unostentatious excellence, never pushing his own claims, retreating from prominence. He was the Christian soldier in his unflinching rectitude, and an ideal of firmness in abiding by his convictions of truth or duty; and when it was a principle that he recognized as necessary to be maintained, there was no shrinking from the demand. He would have had the fortitude of an Athanasius if called to defend against its enemies the Catholic Faith. There was one feature of his Christian character which was especially attractive, and that was his gentle consideration of his brethren in the sacred ministry. He was—

"to their virtues very kind,
And to their faults a little blind."

The mantle of charity was ever in his hand, and he delighted in throwing it lovingly over all; but especially over the differences that would seem to have antagonized his relations with those of the same "household of faith." He always mentioned some palliating circumstance, or urged some gentle consideration. When sought, he was the sympathetic adviser and

counsellor, and would have fulfilled the law of Christ so far as possible in bearing their burdens.

In his sermons and addresses, he employed the most accurate English to express his thought. His writings may be considered almost models of style. Besides his numerous contributions to the Church papers and reviews, he was the author of a volume entitled, *Ember Days and Other Papers,* also *The Holy Eucharist Devotionally Considered,* and *A Study of the Occasional Offices of the Prayer Book.*

He was president of the Standing Committee of the diocese of Ohio since 1896, and an active member of the same for several years previous. He served as deputy to the General Convention since 1892, and assistant secretary of the House of Deputies since 1883. In this latter office, as in all others, he was most painstaking and accurate, and the information comes to us that his work never required correction or revision. He rendered loyal devotion to his bishop; never wearied in doing all in his power to relieve his diocesan of his burden of anxiety and care. Of him, a bishop writes: "He was an ideal priest, and, if we did such things, he should be canonized."

For some time he had been apprehensive

that his heart was seriously affected, yet he omitted nothing of his parochial activities, and devoted himself as conscientiously as ever to his pastoral duties. It has been said that "there was a touch of sadness in his manner, as of one walking softly with God in those calmer days when men get the closer vision of the Better Country."

His last illness was of brief duration. A few days he hourly watched for his Master's summons; ministered to most tenderly by his bishop, who gave him of "The Bread which came down from Heaven, of which if a man eat, he shall live and not die." He entered into Life Eternal on Easter morning, April 15, 1906. He had often expressed a wish, if God so willed, that on the Queen of Festivals he might see the King in His beauty. We feel assured that on the Blessed Feast of the Resurrection he looked into the face of Him whom he loved and delighted to serve.

Considerate of others, when his serious illness was first realized, some two years previous to his death, he had prepared with singular care and with characteristic consideration for those upon whom the duty should rest, minute directions as to the service at burial, which were carefully followed. The body was lying in state in the chapel of Grace Church from 5 P. M.,

Monday, April 16, until 9 A. M., on Tuesday morning. At 9:30 the Burial Office was said by the Bishop of Ohio and the Bishop of Michigan, assisted by Archdeacon Abbott and by the Rev. Charles C. Bubb, curate of Grace Church. At the close of the Committal service, Bishop Leonard proceeded to the Requiem Celebration. The vestry of the parish acted as pall-bearers, and the remains were taken to Batavia, N. Y., where the interment was made, in his own burial lot, near the graves of many of his near kindred; the Rev. Frederick D. Lobdell of Philadelphia saying a few appropriate Collects as the sacred dust was deposited in its last resting place, there to be "kept by the power of God," until the Day of Resurrection.

Edward William Worthington was a priest of singular devotion to the poor, and to those in sorrow; full of sympathy and most wise counsel. His convictions were strong, clear, and well defined. The Church was to him "The Body of Christ," and in his conscientious service in the household of faith, he ministered as to One who was made flesh and dwelt among us. With him the sacramental system of the Church was the perpetuation of that Incarnate Life. There was no compromise of principle or withholding of the truth. As he

preached, so he lived; ever loyal to the faith and to those solemn vows of ordination, when commissioned to "minister the doctrine and sacraments and discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded and as this Church hath received the same."

His earthly life seemed short, as we count the years; but how much of loving devotion to our adorable Lord and Saviour was crowded into it! "Honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years, but wisdom is the grey hair unto men; and an unspotted life is old age."

He rests from his labors, and his works do follow him.

May perpetual Light shine upon him. *Amen.*

GEORGE WORTHINGTON.

Pittsfield, Massachusetts.
June 30th, 1906.

Devotional Introductions

The words, DEVOTIONAL INTRODUCTIONS, were used by Mr. Worthington himself as descriptive of these papers, as they at first appeared at the head of the editorial columns of *The Living Church*.

DEVOTIONAL INTRODUCTIONS.

I.

FOR SEPTUAGESIMA.

WE do not abruptly pass from the glories of the Christmas-tide to the deep shadows of the Passion-tide. Christmas shades off into the Epiphany. The Epiphany leads on to the pre-Lenten season. The pre-Lenten season merges into Lent itself, upon the forty golden steps of which we ascend to Calvary.

Heretofore we have been journeying under the extended illumination from Bethlehem. Now for awhile we are to journey under the anticipated illumination from Calvary. Whatever of needful lesson the Church now brings us, we must receive and ponder beneath the forecast shadow of the Cross.

As we enter "the penumbra of the Lenten eclipse," we are confronted with the parable of the Vineyard, the theme of which, in connection with the pre-Lenten season, in a general way, is this: Work, work in the light which flows from the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Not religious work alone, but all work. The parable marks a transition, not wholly in the thing done, but also and especially in the place where it is done, in the position of the man who does it. We call this transition "entering the Lord's Vineyard"—clearly the reference is to the change wrought in Holy Baptism; and a constraining thought to be borne in mind is that whatever the baptized do, the work of the world no less than work for the Church, they do *in the Lord's vineyard,* beneath the eye of the Master of the vineyard.

Both lessons which flow from this fact are greatly needed.

Surely a baptized man must not be willing to be in the Lord's vineyard and do none of His work, a mere cumberer of holy ground, unwilling to bear "the burden and heat of the day." But, as he cannot all the time be doing "religious work," so-called, let him remember his further vocation as a son of the kingdom; namely, the privilege of doing his own work, the work of the world as we call it, within the sacred enclosure of God's grace, in the Lord's vineyard, under the direction and beneath the watchful eye of the Master of the vineyard, the Searcher of all hearts, "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy."

II.

FOR SEXAGESIMA.

WE take a second step into the pre-Lenten season, and come face to face with the parable of the Sower, the Church's appointed Gospel for Sexagesima.

In expounding this parable to His disciples, our Blessed Lord let fall concerning His teaching a statement which challenges attention: "To others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Many devout people are staggered by this saying, and turn away with the half-suppressed enquiry: Can it be possible that purposely the Christ so spake His word as to have it not comprehended by some who heard it?

It was even so, according to the

testimony of Christ's own acknowledgement.

Our Lord was aware, we may reverently say, that certain men, "others," He calls them, would not receive His word, on the then present occasion, through want of a sufficient spiritual capacity. They might receive it later; but they would not, perhaps could not, receive it then. Hence the alternatives: Should He immediately compel them to reject it; or should He shield them from such guilt, and prolong the time of their opportunity, by so veiling His word in parables, that the unspiritual might truthfully say concerning it: This is beyond our comprehension; we do not understand it?

The parable was a device of love. It had a double power: a power of enlightment, and a power of compassionate concealment. To the spiritually alert, it revealed as does the lightning flash. For the spiritually

dull, it put off the evil day of possible rejection, sinking into their heart, either to remain there forever veiled from their comprehension, or else in some better future to bear "fruit unto life eternal."

"To others in parables," then, was just the same kind of mercy as that which moved the same compassionate Lord not to force the issue of final rejection upon the inhospitable city of the Samaritans, but in forbearance, with His apostles, to withdraw for a season and depart "to another village."

The lesson is for all Christians, since the baptized, to a man, are torch-bearers and teachers. Avoid the hasty issue. Break not the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Forbear to force anyone into the guilt of a precipitate rejection. Have "long patience." "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure."

III.

FOR QUINQUAGESIMA.

WE take a third and last step into the pre-Lenten season, and, as we halt upon the threshold of Lent itself, the Church places before us a type of ourselves and of our present need, in the blind man in the Gospel, whose piercing cry rang through the streets of Jericho: "Have mercy on me, Lord, that I may receive my sight!"

Lent, let us remember, is not so much a season of effort to convert the outside world, as a time of revival and reawakening within the Church. Its message primarily is to the baptized. How many such, whose brows have been wet with the waters of regeneration, sit by the wayside in darkness, having lost their keenness of spiritual vision, un-

able, apparently, to discern their condition, their God, their duty. To some extent, undoubtedly, this is true of all within the Church.

And so Lent comes, tidings of which are borne in upon us, very much as the announcement came to the blind man of Jericho: "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Passeth by; soon gone; not likely to help us this Lent, unless we rise quickly, and seek at once to be brought into His presence.

Many Churchmen lose the opportunity of Lent, not through deliberate inappreciation, but through careless and procrastinating delay. It escapes their grasp, as the prisoner in the Old Testament parable slipped away from the man set to guard him: "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." Not purposely unfaithful, but unnecessarily and fatally preoccupied. Not wishing to remain forever blind, but inexcusably slow to appreciate the

nearness of the Divine Helper, who "passeth by."

"Busy here and there": these words do not describe unavoidable conflict between imperative interests, a critical juncture in which one great obligation simply has to give way to another. They picture rather a type of character commonly met with: that of the man who neglects great things out of an unnecessary devotion to small things, who putters and plays in the very crisis which may mean for him either life or death.

"Busy here and there, and he was gone"; not busy through an inexorable necessity, but fussily so, like the Sergeant of the Law in Canterbury Tales:

> "Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
> And yet he semed bisier than he was."

"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," once more drawing near to us in the invitation and the opportunity of Lent.

Let us not sit by the wayside, content with and cherishing our blindness. Let us permit the Church to lead us promptly into His presence. Let us crown the cry of our heart, "Have mercy," with the definite and sincere request, "Lord, that we may receive our sight!"

IV.

FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE Church calls us at the Lent season to conflict, and, in order that the conflict may be effective, to discipline. As the example of how this conflict shall be maintained, and how this discipline applied, she points us, quite at the start, to the great picture of Christ's temptation in the wilderness.

The battle is upon us inevitably: Lent does not create it. If, however, we have ceased to contend, if we have relaxed discipline and given ourselves over to a non-resistance of evil, Lent summons us to put on again the armor, and to take our place once more in the ranks of the faithful.

Especially does it become us to re-

member, that we are to resist, as did Christ, "steadfast in the faith."

Our Blessed Lord, face to face with Satan in the wilderness, did not altogether rely upon His divinity, as though He were God alone, but fought the battle as well in His humanity, as one of ourselves, not disdaining the aids that are ours, "steadfast in the faith." He fasted; He prayed; He was vigilant; He defended Himself with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

Shall not we resist the same enemy in the same way?

There was moral heroism in some of the pagan philosophers; but they are not to any great extent our example. It is our higher privilege to resist the adversary, "steadfast in the faith." We may—we must as Christians—rely upon the grace of our Baptism and of our Confirmation. Strength may be ours, from the Bread of Life. We may

prepare ourselves for this conflict, as have the saints in all Christian ages, through the discipline of a Rule of Life. The Holy Ghost, "God within us," will bear the brunt of our conflict, if we will to have it so; and His sword, the Word, is ours to an extent and in a degree which surpass the privilege of the days of old.

We will fight our battle, then, not as pagans, not as mere men of the world, strong in the imagined excellence of a "native nobility," but as Christians, "steadfast in the faith."

To us, therefore, the appeal of Lent shapes itself thus:

That we will discern anew our inevitable conflict with Satan, and realize to the full the gravity of its issue;

If we have ceased to struggle, that we will return again and at once to the ranks of the faithful;

Above all, that we will resolve to "resist, steadfast in the faith," not un-

helped by divine grace, but using every advantage that is ours, through Him who hath "delivered us from the power of our enemy" and "redeemed us to God."

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V.

FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

AS far as we are able to judge, it was purposely to place Himself within reach of the Syrophœnician's sorrowful necessity, that our Blessed Lord took the journey from Galilee to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. Nevertheless, when she came into His presence, He interposed delay in granting her petition. First He was silent. Then He spoke to her almost roughly. Only at last, after questioning and explanation—more, probably, than the Gospels record—did Christ lift the burden from the Syrophœnician's heart, with words which He had intended all along to utter: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

We wonder that there could have

been any delay under such urgent circumstances.

Apparently the delay was altogether for the sake of the woman herself—that she might learn certain essential lessons with regard to prayer; and it is with similar purpose, we may conjecture, that the Church gives us this narrative at the Lent season: that we also may be taught to pray aright.

The Syrophœnicion fell into two mistakes. She ventured to employ a title, "Thou Son of David," in all probability with no comprehension of its meaning; and in general the line of her approach to Christ at the start was not the one which became her as a Gentile.

Great was this woman's necessity; and yet Christ did not rush headlong into the granting of her desire. He tarried to instruct her. If, as seems likely, she had spoken the words, "Thou Son of David," unintelligently and as a mere incantation, surely it was worth while

to keep her waiting a moment, and to impart to her the teaching of which she stood in need. If she, "a woman of the nations," had sought with a dash of insincerity to approach Christ as though she were "a daughter of Abraham," surely it was worth while to correct her in this, and to instruct her "as to the relation of the heathen to the Jewish world, and of both to the Messiah."

Thus our Lord, though eager to grant this suppliant's request, nevertheless tarried to instruct her. And the Syrophœnician, with that quickness of comprehension which belongs to woman, saw her mistake and corrected it. She dropped the words which in a way she was not entitled to use, unintelligently at least, and once more cast herself before the Master; this time with the appeal which became her as a Gentile, outside the Davidic covenant: "Lord, help me!"

The lesson has to do with us in our

prayers. Words and titles, unthoughtfully rolled from the lips, transform prayer into a mere incantation. Let us see to it, therefore, that we "pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding also."

VI.

FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

AS we advance into the Lent season, the Church seeks at every turn to make effective our warfare with evil, through opportune help gathered for us from the Scriptures. Thus, in the Gospel which is to engage our attention on Sunday next, among other lessons, she bids us heed our Lord's impressive warning concerning the peril of "empty house."

An evil spirit—so runs the parable—departed from the heart of a man. The habitation, thus vacated, was left by its owner untenanted. The old enemy returned later, and found none to dispute his right to enter. Appreciating the welcome which there was in the fact that the house was "empty, swept, and garnished," he sought "other spirits

more wicked than himself"; they moved in unresisted, eight in number; a last state worse, far worse, than the first had been.

The return of the evil spirit was made certain by the fact that he *went out.* It might have been different had he been *cast out.*

Does it not sometimes happen that an evil spirit leaves, without being in any true sense driven out: for example, when serious sickness overtakes a man who has long given himself to ruinous excess? He liese at death's door. The evil spirit goes out of him, of course, for a time at least. But, if he gets well again, how soon will his ancient enemy appear upon the scene, and clamor to be readmitted to his life.

On the other hand, think of a man half gone to destruction, who, still in health, rises in the strength of returning manhood, and says: "'Tis a grievous shame; with God's help I will put

this evil from my life." He moves in the power of divine grace. He wins a glorious victory. The evil spirit leaves him, not merely going out, but driven out, and therefore not likely to return.

When, however, under any circumstances an evil spirit has departed, safety requires in every case that the house of the heart shall be quickly tenanted with other and better guests.

Under the influence of the religious and moral wave which comes with Lent, evil spirits are departing from one and another of God's distressed people. Let it be hoped that the lives which they leave, may not be permitted to stand "empty, swept, and garnished." The two lines of Lenten requirement work together in beautiful harmony. As now the Church pleads, "Through fasting, self-discipline, and scourging, cast the evil spirit out," so also she adds, "With prayer, sacrament, unremitting worship, and toil for God and men,

tenant the life anew, and fill it full of heavenly visitants." Nothing is more essential to a permanent reformation, than the bringing in of a good spirit to fill the space in a man's heart made vacant by the departure of an evil spirit. Many have failed, and fallen an easy prey to fresh temptation, through the peril of "empty house." We need nothing so much as to be occupied. Heaven pity the man who tries to be good, with nothing to do.

VII.

FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE narrative of the miraculous feeding of the multitude in the wilderness, reminds us at every turn of the Holy Eucharist.

There was the oblation of earthly elements, in the offering of the scanty store of the Galilean lad. The expectant multitude on the mountain-side were the worshippers. More that day than on any previous occasion, Christ stood among the people in priestly capacity. He took; He blessed; He gave thanks. In response to the divine touch, the power of heaven came down upon things of earth. Through the change wrought, the divine purpose of compassion completed itself. All were fed; there was enough, and still God's store was not exhausted; for, in the

gathering up of abundance at the close, we behold type and prophecy of future and perpetual feeding, even unto the end of the world.

The multitude on the mountain-side were not fed, unappreciative and in indiscriminate confusion. They were required to arrange themselves in orderly expectant groups, before their Benefactor, from whose lips had fallen the reasonable command: "Make the men sit down."

Each Lord's day in every well-ordered parish, these same words are spoken by Christ from His altar-throne: "Make the men sit down." What figuratively may the words stand for, in connection with the Holy Eucharist?

They are to us a reminder of our obligation as Christians, in the hour of Holy Communion, to lay aside all other occupations, to suspend all other activities, in order that our attention may be given solely to Christ.

The church bell on Sunday morning rings out the gentle command of the Master: "Make the men sit down." How pitiful the response, in many communities! Is it realized, just what it is, to turn to one's own devices, to seek bodily ease or worldly entertainment, at God's peculiar hour, when the Christ speaks to us from the altar: "Make the men sit down"?

Again, in His words of reasonable command, we may read our Lord's desire, that there shall be no unseemly haste in His service or in His presence.

That day in the wilderness, if a man was not willing to give a little time, to sit down, to be decently mindful of those about him and especially of his Lord, he could withdraw altogether. The five thousand were not fed as poultry are fed.

In the Eucharistic worship of the Church, nothing, we may be sure, is so distasteful to God as that spirit of

haste, which seems to imply that we are in a hurry to escape from Christ's presence. Let us give Christ all the time that is needed for the suitable honoring of His name.

Again, once more, the command of Christ, "Make the men sit down," had in mind, most properly, the placing of those people in an attitude of acknowledged dependence before their Divine Benefactor. They were not to stand up like lords, and help themselves as equals with Christ at God's table. They must dispose themselves humbly.

This same spirit befits us in our worship. The condescension is wholly upon God's part. Our pride and self-esteem must not follow us to the altar; for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble."

"Make the men sit down!"

VIII.

FOR PASSION SUNDAY.

IN her Gospel for Passion Sunday, the Church bids us look upon a scene truly sorrowful, and yet one which may easily escape our understanding, especially in its bearing upon the Passion-tide.

Within the precincts of His Father's house, the Christ is set at naught by the men of His own nation, the rulers of the Jews. His healing of the man born blind has roused them to a high pitch of opposition. With threatening mien they gather about Him in the Temple. They accuse Him of being a Samaritan; they charge Him, the Holy One, with demoniacal possession. Stones are at hand with which to stone Him.

Calm and majestic, without the slightest trace of fear, the Christ faces

His enemies, and endeavors to quiet them with gentle words: "I seek not Mine own glory. If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death." This rouses them the more, and it is they who introduce the mention of Abraham. Out of the past, the centuries of long ago, rises in thought the stately figure of the Father of the Faithful. Once and again these Jews have sought fit to discomfit Christ by quoting Moses as His enemy. Now they endeavor to overthrow Him with the mention of Abraham.

But our Lord does not permit these Jews thus to misrepresent and dishonor the father of their nation. To Abraham they have appealed, and by him they shall be condemned.

Abraham, our Lord declares, sustained a relationship to "the day of the Son of Man." He saw it; He saw it afar off, in the anticipation of faith; but "he saw it, and was glad." What these men in that hour were doing,

Abraham would not have done, for he rejoiced to see Christ's day, though but dimly visible to his expectant soul across the wide expanse of intervening centuries.

Yet Abraham did see, and rejoiced. He saw, in the anticipation made possible through his splendid faith. But this is not all; there was another way in which we may believe that Abraham saw Christ's day. Abraham was not dead; he was alive in the spirit-world, where he shared the knowledge vouchsafed to angels. May we not think it was known to him: the hour when the Son of God bade farewell to "the company of heaven," that He might come to earth in the humiliation of His Incarnation? Long centuries before, God had said: "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" Surely it is possible—is it not even likely?—that our Lord referred to some tender scene which had been enacted in

the spirit-world, when He said: "Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad."

We find, then, the point of our Lord's reproof. What others, Abraham included, had longed for and looked forward to, these men in the Temple beheld with their eyes and yet despised. Patriarchs and prophets had cherished the expectation of a Messiah—up to the measure of their faith, they had seen His day and rejoiced—but the men of Jerusalem, among whom Messiah came with hands outstretched, looked upon His face and made ready to stone Him. Pathetic, pleading, tender, reproving words: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad!"

This is the Gospel which the Church gives us on Passion Sunday, and her purpose is apparent. The season of holy commemoration upon which we now enter, is indeed for us "the day of

the Son of Man." Let us not steel our hearts against it, as did the men of Jerusalem. Rather, with the Father of the Faithful, let us see it and be glad.

IX.

FOR PALM SUNDAY.

THE triumphal entry was an event which stood absolutely alone and without a parallel in the earthly life of the Son of God. For once He yielded Himself to the acclamations of the multitude: not because the approving shouts of the people were dear to Him as they are to other men, but rather in order that ancient prophecy might be fulfilled, and they who had eyes to see might behold Him at the gates of the Holy City, on this occasion with no concealment of the fact that He came as the rightful Heir of David's throne.

It was a royal scene, but in a manner and with a method quite devoid of earthly pomp. The kingly portion of it was not the outward splendor of attendant circumstance, but the Christ

Himself, in whom were manifested the royal marks of meekness and lowliness. Especially was it kingly, after a heavenly fashion, in the fact that He who thus came, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Two facts need to be kept in mind, as essential to our understanding of the triumphal entry.

First, the bearing upon Palm Sunday of the miracle which our Lord just previously had performed in Bethany, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This, we may be sure, had turned toward Christ a great wave of interest and expectation. It was not merely curiosity; it was rather the irrepressible desire of men, amid the universal sorrow of life, to come in contact with One who has power over death, and to hear the gracious words of One who has tidings from the world beyond.

St. John informs us that "much peo-

ple of the Jews came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead." This accounts for the multitude already with our Lord in Bethany, and for the still greater multitude that went forth from Jerusalem Palm Sunday morning to meet Him upon the way. Poor stricken souls, many of them, we may be sure, drawn to the Christ by their expectation that He who had raised Lazarus from the dead, knew and could tell them of the life beyond.

Second, it needs to be remembered that, with the exception of a few sneering Pharisees, it was a well-disposed multitude that accompanied Christ in the triumphal entry, not enemies but friends, or at least those who were willing to be His friends.

Again it is St. John who supplies the needed information. He tells us that the Palm Sunday multitude was com-

posed of people who had come to Jerusalem to keep the Paschal Feast. It was they, well-disposed pilgrim people, many of them His Galilean friends, who went forth that morning to meet and to welcome the Christ.

It mars our conception of Palm Sunday to suppose that the multitude with their Hosannas was the same crowd which so soon cried out "Crucify Him," and that reluctant acclamations were extracted from the unwilling lips of Christ's enemies, the men of Jerusalem, among whom He had scarcely a friend. St. John turns our thought gladly to Galilee, to pilgrim people who loved the Lord, and whose Hosannas were precious to Him.

So He came, a King. And so He was received with the royal honor which prophecy had accorded Him.

Palm Sunday ushers in the Holy Week. Now it becomes us, sons and daughters of the Church, once more

having received Christ as our King, to follow His footsteps as He ascends to Calvary. His words in the garden, are His words to us at each turn in the great commemoration: "Tarry ye here, and watch with Me!"

X.

FOR EASTER.

HOW graphically, and with what a touch of poetry, is the Easter fact in its relationship to light set forth in this fragment from the narrative of the Resurrection: "As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week!"

An age-long darkness drew near to its final and permanent close. A day was at hand that would never end, a day illumined with a light that would never fade. It was an extraordinary transition that waited to be ushered in, on that Easter morning, "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

The world had gone to its rest the night before, as it would never go to its rest again, in darkness. True, indeed, the all atoning sacrifice had been offered on Calvary; but light could not ema-

nate therefrom, so long as He who had offered it remained dead in Joseph's tomb. Associated with Calvary was darkness—"from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour"—and the shadows remained through Easter-even. So long as the tomb was closed and sealed, even the body of Christ lay in darkness. Good Friday and Easter-even belonged to the world's long night: to its last hours, however, for in them sparkled the glimmer of an approaching dawn.

The new beginning was on Easter the dawn of the first day: symbol indeed of what Christ's Resurrection was and is to the world; literally a new creation, as when at the first God said, "Let there be light:" and it was so.

The night which preceded the Easter dawn had been age-long; so also shall be the day that followed. It is a day that can have no end, so long as the world shall last. From then, now and

forever, men may live in the light, toil in the light, suffer if need be in the light, die in the light. All things are changed. It cannot be as it was before. Potentially, at least, in the Resurrection of Christ was His right to say, "Behold, I make all things new." The newness, the change, the re-creation, were spiritually to be akin to that which had taken place at the beginning, when God said, "Let there be light!"

What, then, shall be the practical message of Easter to us? What *can* it be but this: a reminder of which side the dawn we stand; an appeal, that we go not back into darkness, as though Christ had not risen; a command, even from the Invisible Throne on High, that as redeemed men we "walk in the light," which attached itself permanently to this world in that hour when "it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

The light which came with Easter is

a light to illumine life; and it is a light to illumine death. We must not reverse this order, as though death were the primary consideration. The first of all Easter considerations is the fact that by His Resurrection, "Jesus Christ hath brought *life* to light."

Easter, then, throws light upon, makes visible, *the life* to which we are called as followers of One who has conquered all foes, and destroyed "the last enemy," even death.

Here undoubtedly we are in great danger of not pressing on to the full lesson of Easter. We think of Easter too much in its bearing upon death, and not enough in its bearing upon life. We forget the truth, more than once insisted upon by St. Paul, that the baptized man who lives not the Risen Life, so far as he himself is concerned, closes Joseph's tomb again and imprisons therein a dead Christ.

Nothing can be plainer than the

fact that, in the case of the Christ's first followers, it was the Resurrection of their Lord which roused, liberated, set free, all the powers of their being, and enlisted them without reserve in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven. Thenceforth for them the sole aim of existence, the sweetest joy of life, was to serve their Risen Lord.

"Lord of Life" means more than "Conqueror of death." It means, especially, the kingly right of Him who by His Resurrection prevailed over every foe, to claim for Himself and in His service the whole life of every man. Thus the Apostles interpreted the obligation placed upon them by the Easter fact. Vain the Resurrection for the man who does not say to the Risen Lord: "I will be wholly Thine; I will serve Thee to the uttermost; I will go in Thy name withersoever Thou sendest me; to do Thy will shall be my highest joy."

Light from the open tomb of Christ streamed out upon a world, in which His followers were to work and to serve, and not to die in peace until their work was finished and their service on earth heroically ended.

Furthermore, Christ by His Resurrection has brought to the world the light that may illumine death. St. Paul boldly declares that death is abolished; by which we may understand him to mean that it is so changed, so robbed of its sting, as to be practically non-existent. This is the same truth which our Lord declared when He said: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

The old-time death, the going of men hopeless and helpless out into the darkness, is potentially abolished by the rising again of the second Adam, the new head of the human family. Thenceforth no one need die as men had died before, as Thomas à Kempis puts

it, "Torn like the mandrake shrieking and bleeding from the earth."

By the Resurrection of Christ, if men will only consent to have it so, the old-time death is completely and forever abolished. Thanks be to God, who hath taken away from death its former victory, and given unto us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

XI.

FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

IT is impossible that we shall think of Easter, and of the Lord's Day a week later, apart from St. Thomas, whose inability to accept the fact of his Lord's resurrection we may conjecture was largly a matter of unfortunate temperament. Some have supposed that St. Thomas was the victim of poor health; others that he was afflicted with a bias toward mental depression, constitutional and therefore not wholly a weakness of the imagination. Clearly he was of kin with "the man who when confronted with the choice between two evils chooses both." We need not upbraid him. We pity him, and are thankful indeed for the compassion and the condescension with which our Lord was willing to meet the tempera-

mental weakness of His doubting apostle.

His brethren also seem thoroughly to have understood St. Thomas, and held themselves marvellously in check, as is shown by the method of their effort to win and conciliate him.

When the apostles came together on the evening of Easter day, at which time their Lord drew near to them with His salutation of "Peace," St. Thomas was conspicuously and purposely absent. This was a mistake on his part. It was a surrender without battle; it was open confession of an unwillingness to seek, or even to allow, the evidence that might compel conviction.

Especially worthy of our notice is the careful and tender manner in which his brother apostles dealt with St. Thomas, at this critical juncture in his career. It would have been unhappily and fatally natural, had they scored him unmercifully—ringing the changes

on such words as "childish," "unreasonable"—all which, or any of it, would have driven the unhappy man to desperation.

What did these apostles do? So far as we can gather from the Gospels, they uttered no word of reproach, however merited such word might have been. Knowing their man and his sensitiveness (unreasonable sensitiveness, no doubt), they mastered themselves sufficiently, merely to drop within his hearing the arresting statement, "We have seen the Lord!"

St. Thomas, as we know, was wooed and won to a better mind. The next first day of the week, the apostles came together again, and St. Thomas was with them. All the contributing causes that wrought this change may not be discernible; but not least among them undoubtedly was the hallowed restraint of his brethren, who had held themselves back from the utterance of accusing

words, and had staked their opportunity to influence solely upon the inherent power of their subdued declaration, "We have seen the Lord!"

This subject has evident bearing upon the problem of the non-church-goer.

Picture the familiar case of a religious wife, pained and grieved by her husband's neglect of public worship. How can she best seek to influence him in the direction of the desire that lies near to her wounded heart? She may assail him with bitter words, reminding him of that concerning which he welcomes no reminder: how he used to go with her to church before they were married, and goes not now. This he will probably receive with a tantalizing indifference, which can only increase the bitterness of her sorrow.

There is another way of dealing with such a problem: the way which the apostles tried in the case of St. Thomas. Say nothing about *his* neglect; but tell

him, or let him observe the fact, that *you* in the Father's House have seen the Lord. Few can resist the power of such witness. St. Thomas felt it. There is scarcely anyone who cannot be led to feel it. It is an argument not readily answered. It is an appeal not easily slighted.

XII.

FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

IN every way significant is the fact that the Church gives us as an after-Easter Gospel, the great words of our Blessed Lord concerning Himself as "The Good Shepherd."

Christ yielded His life for the world; but, having done this, He did not forthwith and forever withdraw from contact with the world by remaining, a mere dead man, in Joseph's tomb. He came forth alive, to be the Leader and the Shepherd of the humanity, whom He had ransomed. "I am the Good Shepherd"—not words that are retrospective merely, but after-Easter words in the truest sense. The Church is profoundly right, now that we have again taken into our hearts the Good Friday fact of Redemption, in requiring that we shall move promptly and

energetically on to the acknowledgment, that He who died and rose again from the dead is, must be, the King of men, the Shepherd of the sheep.

Any other view than this is debilitating and unworthy; but the weakening view seems still to prevail. We follow Christ to Calvary; we glory in the Redemption, of which we are too sinful not to feel our need. We are on hand at Easter, for Easter seems to seal the efficacy of that which was done for us on Good Friday. But do we follow Christ with the enthusiasm of a true devotion, as He moves forth from the empty tomb, to subdue the world to His kingly rule?

'Tis just here that we are in danger of inexcusable failure.

The whole Easter-tide ought to be a time of supreme and sustained devotion. All good things and all great things, even the most difficult, should now be possible, under the leadership of our

risen and victorious Lord. But such is not the case. In nearly every parish, before the Easter flowers have faded upon the altar, there is a tremendous drop, a sinking back into lethargy, a sickening failure to transmute the Easter triumph into a permanent and progressive triumph. Congregations dwindle, communions become less frequent, offerings are diminished—think of it, right in the midst of the glories of the Easter-tide! We have become so accustomed to this retrograde movement, this ebbing of the tide after Easter, that we do not sufficiently appreciate the wrong of it, and its shocking disloyalty to the risen Christ.

Against the possibility of such failure, the Church seeks to warn us and to guard us, in her selection of the Good Shepherd Gospel for the Eastertide.

To have it right, the Risen Christ must be permitted to become the ac-

cepted Shepherd of the entire human family. His heart goes out to the whole sinful and weary world of men, whom He wills to draw unto Himself. This is not a fact for us to fall asleep over. It calls every baptized man to wakeful activity, to diligence, to alertness, to sacrifice. The Easter-tide is no time to ease off in what we propose to do for Christ, for the Church, for the world. The Risen Lord may claim our devotion to the utmost.

Let us see to it, then, so far as it lies within our power to have it so, that the Resurrection fact be translated into action and glorious achievement. Let us strive for this, strictly on the line of "the Good Shepherd desire" of the Lord of Life, not permitting ourselves to be numbered among those who meet the risen Christ with devotion that halts on Easter Monday, slackens all through the Easter-tide, and at midsummer dwindles to absolutely nothing.

XIII.

FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

AS we advance through the Eastertide, more and more the Church seeks to prepare us for the Ascensiontide and for Pentecost, just as our Lord Himself with thought and tenderness made ready His followers for the change which awaited them in His inevitable departure from their presence.

The words of Christ touching His Ascension abound most of all in reference to the compensation which there would be in the coming of the Holy Ghost. The Gospel for the Third Sunday after Easter is one of these utterances, not to be understood by us if we fail to keep in mind the fact, that the central theme of the discourse of which it is a part, is the enrichment of the

world and of human life through the advent of the Holy Ghost.

The key to the understanding of our Blessed Lord's words, "A little while, etc.," has generally been thought to reside in His return at Easter: He would go away; but speedily He would come back to earth again. By some the explanation has been sought in His Second Advent.

There is, however, another view, quite worthy of consideration. May it not have been that Christ's pledge of compensation refers rather to what was in store for His followers in the promised advent of the Comforter?

There are two different words in the original of this passage, both of which are translated "see." The first refers to physical sight; the second, to spiritual sight. (Alford). Keeping this fact in mind, and concluding that the "shall not see" leads on to the hours which lay between the Crucifixion and

the Resurrection, while the "shall see" which follows leads on to Pentecost, how luminous and stimulating the prophecy becomes!

In this way interpreted, the promise of our Lord to His disciples shapes itself thus: A little while, and ye shall not see Me with the eye of the body: and again, a little while, and ye shall begin to see Me with the eye of the soul.

The words that follow, "because I go to the Father," now become intermediary and explanatory: It is because I go away that this better understanding, this higher vision, will be made possible. The Holy Ghost will come; "He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you;" "He shall teach you, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;" "He shall testify of Me."

Of all this, St. Paul gathers up the great and practical lesson in the words: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord,

but by the Holy Ghost." For the right and due understanding of the Christ, for the ability really and suitably to behold Him with the eye of the soul, we are absolutely dependent upon the power and the testimony within us of the Spirit of Truth.

How essential, then, it is that from the Easter-tide we shall press on with joyful anticipation to Pentecost. How essential that, if not confirmed, we shall seek Confirmation, "the Sacra- of the Holy Ghost," and shall employ to the utmost its illuminating gifts. How essential that we shall accept the apostolic ministry and shall reverence the Scriptures—both of which are gifts of the Holy Ghost to the Church —lest for us, groping amid the darkness, the "little while" of not seeing shall prolong itself to the end of our probation, and we depart this life poor at the last in that we have never really seen the Lord.

XIV.

FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

AN important line of thought opens before us, as in the Gospel for this Sunday of the Easter-tide we read these words of Christ: "None of you asketh Me!"

In a previous Gospel, that of Sunday last, we are told concerning the apostles that "Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him."

Desirous to ask Christ—how often is this true of us, amid the perplexities of life.

To hold ourselves in union with an invisible Master—one with whom we may not speak directly, one who in a sense is silent to us from the cradle to the grave—this is a peculiar difficulty of the Christian life.

Yet it needs to be remembered that

there are ways in which Christ does speak to us.

If we have knowledge of the Gospels —if the story of the Divine Life on earth has thoroughly penetrated and permeated our souls—the experiences of human existence not changing very much from age to age, scarcely a crisis is likely to rise in our lives, concerning which we may not know that the Christ has at some time spoken. Thus regarded, His words to the tempted, to the sorrowful, to those of little faith, to the bereaved, to the perplexed, to those weighted with great responsibility, become in reality His words to us, according to our need. It ought frequently to be our experience, that we shall say in our hearts: This which comes to me, came long ago to another; to him it was permitted to ask Christ; what Christ said to him then, is therefore His word for me now.

In order that so it may be with us

and with our children, it is clearly essential that the Gospels shall be to us familiar to that degree in which it becomes possible that we may think their words unbidden.

How ominous, then, is the banishment of the Bible from a home; how alarming the fact, if it be a fact, as claimed by Archdeacon Wilson, that "there never has been an age in which the Bible was so much studied by scholars, and so little read in the homes of people for guidance and instruction, as at the present time."

The on-coming generation, the boys and girls of to-day, when grown to manhood and womanhood, are destined to cope with peculiar difficulties.

Worldliness and unbelief seem to be extending their sway. Reverence, to a great extent, has perished, under the chilling influence of Protestantism. That which former generations revered, the present generation is disposed to

dissect, to criticise, and to scorn. Absurd beliefs gain a more ready hearing and a more devoted following than do the sober truths of the Gospel. Men have become self-reliant to the verge of madness, and seem almost to have concluded that God is little needed in the world.

These disturbing forces are at work, and in their deeper development will help create the atmosphere, in which our children, grown to manhood and womanhood, must work out the problem of their probation.

Surely a generation, thus circumstanced, will need to "ask Christ." It is a poor time, through the unfamiliarity which springs from neglect, to banish the Bible from the home. How helpless will be the on-coming generation, if Christ be silent to them in their difficulties; if, because they are untaught in the Scriptures, no scene of old in Judæa, in Samaria, in Galilee, shall

flash upon their minds as counterpart to their own experience, when Jesus knew that men desired to ask Him and He spoke to them freely the needed word.

XV.

FOR ROGATION SUNDAY.

THE Church seeks on Rogation Sunday to win our attention to the subject of prayer.

The days now passing in the Christian year correspond to the days which immediately preceded our Lord's Ascension. It is supposable that the disciples, knowing that their Lord was to leave them, had parting requests to make, and that He seized the opportunity thus afforded to teach them how to pray. This He had begun to do long before; and the Church wisely gives us as the Gospel for Rogation Sunday that lection from St. John, at the forefront of which stand the arresting words, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you."

Bishop Gore reminds us that "when

we examine the utterances of Christ with regard to prayer, we find that they consist of large general promises, subsequently defined and modified."

A promise of such nature is this, from the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask, and it shall be given you." One might suppose this means: "When you desire anything, whatever it may be, ask God for it, and He will give it to you." But the invitation thus given is modified. It is modified in the fact that our Lord does not specifically declare that the exact thing asked for will always be given. It is further modified by the contextual position of the promise; which should convince us that Christ had in mind, not so much temporal blessing as grace to do God's will, especially the help which a man will need if he essays to carry out the difficult injunction with regard to charitable judgment, just previously uttered in the Sermon on the Mount.

So is it in the opening words of today's Gospel. Here is the large, general promise: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, He will give it you." And here is the modification, the reasonable limitation of the promise: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in My Name!*"

The added words, "in My Name," wall out from hopeful expectation all requests that are contrary to the mind of Christ: for example, the gambler's prayer for success, the enraged man's prayer for personal revenge, the undisciplined man's prayer for further means to indulge himself and so lose his soul.

The added words exalt the spiritual above the physical, grace and God's kingdom above the comforts of the body; for things asked in Christ's Name must be discriminated according to His view of life.

The added words assume the sub-

mission of the asker's will to the Father's will, as under all circumstances was the case with Him in whose Name our petition is made.

In short, prayer in Christ's Name must be, as has been finely said, "the prayer of moral correspondence, the prayer of spiritual conformity."

The Rogation-tide lesson thus suggested may well lead us to a determined effort, if possible, to understand Christ wholly in the matter of prayer. Such effort, if honestly made, will only convince us that each limitation which our Lord attaches to prayer, instead of narrowing its scope, in reality enriches prayer.

True, indeed, that "the most powerful and the richest of human faculties is the faculty of prayer." And true also, that there rests ever upon us the necessity to make our own the petition of the disciples, "Lord, teach us how to pray."

XVI.

FOR EXPECTATION SUNDAY.

WHEN St. Luke, in the Acts, wrote concerning St. Paul, that "he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost," words were inscribed which may well arrest our attention on Expectation Sunday.

We stand now in the midst of great festivals, monumental landmarks of the Christian Year. Ascension Day has just gone by, and we are hurrying on to Whitsunday.

Our Blessed Lord took infinite pains to lead the hearts of His apostles, with a suitable preparation, from the Triumphant Entry to Calvary, from Calvary to Easter, from Easter to the Ascension, from the Ascension to Pentecost. So, we may believe, it is His will concerning us that we shall

follow carefully and connectedly the mysteries which have to do with our Redemption; and that, to be specific, the great festival of Whitsunday shall not come upon us unawares, or find us unprepared for the appreciation of its solemnities.

Therefore we have in the Church what are called "the Days of Expectation"; the true spirit of which was well exhibited by St. Paul in his anxiety "to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."

Long before, weeks and perhaps months, St. Paul had begun his journey from Corinth, aflame with the desire, if possible, to keep the feast in the Holy City. He brooked no unreasonable delay; he sailed past Ephesus, not venturing to tarry there, lest Pentecost should overtake him elsewhere than amid those hallowed surroundings which might enable him to celebrate this festival gloriously, to the highest advantage, and with large measure of personal edification.

How many things would combine to make "Pentecost at Jerusalem" an experience to be supremely appreciated by one so enthusiastic and so spiritually-minded as St. Paul. As a Jew, and even more as a Christian, it was but following a heavenly impulse, that over the waters, and past cities to which he could not be indifferent, "he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."

Here is an example for us, and here an inspiration that should move us to grasp with devotion the true spirit of the Expectation Days.

For the Churchman, alas, too often, Whitsunday is shorn of glory, practically ruined, through sheer lack of that expectant forethought which the Church enjoins.

"Yes, we were in church; but not until the service was under way did it dawn upon us that 'Pentecost was fully come,' or had come at all." "We did not

go to church last Sunday—an invitation to go elsewhere tempted us—we did not realize till too late that we were missing the Whitsun feast."

How different the spirit which makes possible such damaging confession, from the spirit which moved St. Paul to journey in expectant haste from Corinth, to pass by cities and homes and friends that were dear to him, impelled by the eager hope that he might keep Pentecost amid surroundings that would lift devotion to its greatest height, upon the very spot perhaps where the band of believers had been assembled, when "the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, with a sudden great sound and in the likeness of fiery tongues."

Then, too, was not the expectant readiness of the apostles, on the first Whitsunday, a model for the Christians of each succeeding age: "They were all with one accord in one place"?

XVII.

FOR WHITSUNDAY.

WITH joyful anticipation we draw near to celebrate and to commemorate that event most memorable in the history of the world and of the Church, the coming of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost—not, as some carelessly say, "it"; not, as some would have it, a mere attribute, one of many manifestations, of the Godhead; but Himself a Divine Person, one with the Father, one with the Son, "the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets."

With power and great glory, with supernatural manifestation of His presence in the "rushing mighty wind"

and the "cloven tongues like as of fire," with visible exercise of a kingly dominion over the minds and hearts of men, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," the Holy Ghost entered into this world, to become, and to be, "God within us" to the end of time.

Under the third and final dispensation, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, it is our privilege to live. How much to us should be the Whitsun-feast. It is the birthday of the Christian Church, a time therefore of corporate rejoicing; and also no less an occasion of individual thanksgiving, the memorial day upon which He came who to each one of us is nearer than the nearest, who not only abides with us but within us.

St. Paul implores us—it is the appeal to which we should give searching heed on Whitsunday—not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Let us not grieve the Holy Ghost by holding in light esteem His gifts: the gift of Himself in Confirmation; the gift of the written word in Holy Scripture; the gift of the apostolic ministry, in the setting apart of which His is the ordaining hand; the gift of those possible fruits (Gal. v. 22, 23), "heaven-born on earth," which are of His imparting alone.

Especially let it be our prayer and hope, less and less to grieve the Holy Ghost by resisting the appeal of His tender voice, which speaks ever in our inmost heart. Because we have so often done this—how easily it is done—amid all the rejoicing of the Christian Pentecost, it is still true, alas! that no day of the lengthening year brings to us, or should bring, a keener pang of self-reproach.

"The love of Christ is the favorite theme of Christian hearts; they never weary, they ought never to weary, of

recounting it. Yet is there another love—we will not say closer or more indefatigable, for it becomes us not, to create differences where none exist—still there is a love, St. Paul expressly calls it 'the love of the Spirit,' which seems to come, if it were possible, even nearer than the other. It is the love of Him who abides not only with us but within us; who bears, so to say, the brunt of our provocations and backslidings and unaccountable waywardnesses; who feels, at their source and spring, the ingratitude and the evil of our veiled hearts; who suffers, with an intensity proper to Deity, the shame of His contact with the sinfulness of the sinful."

St. Paul's exhortation, then, should come to us with appealing force at the Whitsun-tide: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

XVIII.

FOR TRINITY SUNDAY.

WE have reached "the divide," the central point, of the Christian Year. Hitherto, since the beginning of the Advent season, we have been contemplating in stately sequence the various facts concerning the Godhead which were revealed through the Incarnation. These revealed facts are now harmonized for us by the Church in the doctrine of Trinity in Unity. It was the promise of our Lord, that the Holy Ghost should guide His Church into all truth.

Throughout the second half of the Christian Year, the evident purpose of the Church, in her appointed services, is to help us apply this faith to our life in the world.

We cross "the divide" through the

gate of Trinity Sunday, which gathers into itself the entire revealed doctrine of the Godhead. This we now behold and revere, as completing all that has gone before, and as constituting the sure foundation on which may rest all that shall follow after:

"We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.

"The Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal."

The men who framed the Creeds did not invent this doctrine. It is the Church's authoritative statement of those truths concerning God which were revealed by Christ, and of which there is clear record in the Scriptures.

This doctrine of the Godhead has, must have, a weighty bearing upon man's life in the world. In addition to the fact that right living bases itself most securely upon right believing, it

needs also to be remembered that no obligation of men can possibly transcend their obligation to receive and to appreciate that whole body of truth which God has mercifully revealed concerning Himself.

It comes to us, therefore, as a practical question on Trinity Sunday: Do we believe, even to the utmost limit of the knowledge vouchsafed to us; and do we transmute our belief into life?

How can it be otherwise than that a man, to whom the Christian Gospel has come, jeopardizes his soul to the utmost, if this be his reply: "I care for none of this talk about Christ and the Holy Ghost. My God is the God of Nature, the Power that lies back of the universe, personal or impersonal—who knows; who cares? My God of Nature I need not worship; 'tis enough that I seek to live in harmony with His laws."

As regards God and His relationship to men, ignorance where knowledge

is possible, is a sin of the first magnitude.

When God has kept back nothing, but has revealed Himself in fulness to men; when the Father, who created man, claims him for His child; when the Son has redeemed man in blood and sorrow upon the cross; when the Holy Ghost seeks to enter into man, to sanctify him wholly—if nothing comes of all this, if man merely meets this love and this possibility of knowledge with a vacant stare of indifference, must it not be that a grievous sin is committed against the light?

Let us think of this on Trinity Sunday. How in every way it befits us, to heed the injunction of St. Paul: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."

XIX.

FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE parable of to-day's Gospel might well be called "The Parable of a Selfish Life." It was not spoken primarily to give information concerning "the beyond" and "the hereafter." Its purpose, we may safely say, was to convince men of the inherent ugliness and wrong, in this world, of the self-centered life. Nearly the whole of our Blessed Lord's revelation concerning the world to come, was made known for a moral purpose within the sphere of this life. When He lighted up the future, it was, in almost every case, that the illumination might shine back upon the present, to guide men along the devious pathway of the life that now is. Herein is a sufficient explanation of the fact that the parable of

to-day's Gospel, though a parable of "the beyond," may not be read appropriately either by the bedside of the dying, or at the burial of the dead. It was spoken for the living, for tempted men still in the midst of their earthly probation.

Dives is not punished because he has been rich. Lazarus is not rewarded because he has been poor. The purple, the fine linen, the sumptuous fare, the rags, the sores, are but the outward setting of the tragedy. The fatal antithesis, the decisive difference, is in the characters of the two men. They might easily have exchanged destinies, had distress fallen upon Dives, and had Lazarus in his rags closed his heart against an opportunity to help. We may even conjecture, absorption in self being the danger, that there lay for Lazarus a peril in his sores, no less than for Dives in his sumptuous fare.

God takes account of what is being

done in the world; God will cause to be remembered in the judgment a man's determination to lead the self-centered life: such in brief outline is the lesson of this parable.

One does not need to be what the world calls positively wicked, in order to condemn himself in the sight of God. We are not told that Dives had outraged decency, that he was profane or lewd or drunken. He merely did what is easy for anyone to do; he so fixed his thought upon his own personal enjoyment, as to have no heart of pity for other men's misery.

This temptation probably had closed in upon Dives gradually. Doubtless in early years he had possessed those tender sensibilities which move to pity. He may often have helped men like Lazarus. But riches had increased, to multiply the dangers of his probation; and little by little he had withdrawn from helpful contact with the

world, in order to keep up with the exacting demands of a self-indulgent life.

At last this tragedy came to its inevitable crisis. God, who had been looking on all the while and had sought in vain to rouse this perishing man, permitted Lazarus to slip by the keepers of the gate and to sink exhausted upon the doorstep of Dives. With this pitiable sight before his eyes, Dives was forced to know, for once, the conditions which exist in the world. He had walled out this knowledge for long, but it had crept through at last, and had come to the very door of his palace.

Dives saw—the parable is pointless except he saw; but the sight of the suffering Lazarus did not appeal to him, nor stay his preparation for the sumptuous fare of another day. Let the feast go on, its guilty pleasure uninterrupted by the nearness of the dying beggar. Let the groan of Lazarus upon the door-

step be drowned by the noisy mirth, the music of the harp and the viol within.

This earthly scene is in itself so terrible, so tragic, that it seems scarcely to need the lurid light thrown back upon it from the other world. But so determined was our Lord that men should fully know "the bitter all" of selfishness, that for once He drew back the veil from "the beyond," and revealed a picture that ought long ago to have banished the selfish life utterly from the earth.

And yet—and yet—men hear but heed not. The tragedy of the self-centered life still repeats itself: Dives feasts within, while at his door Lazarus suffers and dies neglected.

XX.

FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

IN the second half of the Christian Year, the Trinity-tide, the Epistles at the start are steadily taken from the first great letter of St. John. The theme is clear and unmistakable: Love, the fruit of the Incarnation; love, God's expectation in man, redeemed and dowered with grace through the sacrifice of the Divine Life in the world.

We cannot say that the present age is conspicuously loyal to this view and conception of the true life. Men, as we find them nowadays, are humane, but not in a marked degree loving. Domestic affection, tender love between fathers and mothers, parents and children, brothers and sisters, seems in our disordered society to be sadly on the

wane. Religious love—intense affection for God, and for man in the brotherhood of Christ—we still find, but it is not common.

To a great extent it is probably true that men in the Church, hardly less than men in the world, need to be roused to "the life of service, based upon love." Religion easily becomes mechanical and lifeless. Men drill themselves to its perfunctory acts, unmindful of the fact that prayers and worship and almsgiving *without love* are like alimony, a support by command of the court for an unloved and discarded wife.

Yet how clear it is to every diligent student of the Gospels, that Christ saw the hopelessness of expecting men to do right from motives of mere selfish utility; and that he laid no command upon the human heart, without confident expectation that His desire would be carried out, if love for God might be permitted to rule the life.

Religion, then, without love is outside the range of Christ's expectation; and it is impossible, from the viewpoint of the Gospel, that love for God shall dwell in the heart without begetting religion in the life.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Religion is love; and love for God should move to love for man: especially within the inner circle of the faithful, the Catholic Church, the baptized, the brethren. To be brought into this "goodly fellowship," and not to "love the brethren," is to fail and to fall short of one's resurrection from death unto life.

All the more beautiful therefore, because not found easily and every where, is the Christian after Christ's own heart, the Catholic in life as well as in faith. He loves the brethren. His heart responds to the fact that the baptismal bond unites him not

to Christ alone, but to the brethren as well. He feels tenderly towards all with whom he shares the privileges of the Christian life. He prays for them. Their joys are his joys; their sorrows his sorrows. He will not worship alongside people, and make no effort to form and to cherish their acquaintance. In church he is ever on the alert, to welcome the new-comer, to cheer with friendly interest the stranger and chance-worshipper. When a babe is baptized and received into the congregation, he realizes that to this child should go out warmly and permanently the love of the brethren; and when he kneels to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, there is the out flowing of his interest, on behalf of all who kneel beside him.

"O si sic omnes!" Passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren!"

XXI.

FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE lesson of the Gospel for this Sunday, stated in general terms, is the fact that the lost are missed.

Do we realize what infinite pains Christ took to impress upon the heart of the world the fact that the love of God for every man is so great, that it is impossible anyone shall be lost and not missed? No other truth did He teach with such persistent reiteration. That it might be clearly set forth, He summoned His utmost powers of description; He painted one beautiful picture, and immediately another, and then another—the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Son—three matchless parables, to convince the world that it is impossible any forlorn, unfortunate, or

even sinful soul shall be lost and not missed.

These parables are parables of grace, rather than of judgment. It is not their purpose to describe what will finally befall the lost, but rather to make men see how grievous a thing it is, at once and all along, to be lost. The woman, the shepherd, the father, instantly respond to the tidings of tragedy, and every weary hour that intervenes, between the losing and the finding, is with them an hour of intense misery. In each case, it is the overwhelming anxiety of the loser which indicates the extent of the misfortune which has befallen the lost.

That the father missed the son, we infer from the joy with which he received him on his return. Between the lines we read the story of the weariness with which the days dragged themselves along in that sorrowful household. What good thing was provided there

which did not move the father to say with anguish in his heart: Would that my son were here to share this with us?

Yet, as between God and men, we are slow to believe that the lost are missed.

There is no service in the Church, from which God does not miss every absent member of His flock; but we fail to realize this. Sometimes we sin against God's love, by permitting ourselves to doubt whether He really cares what shall be the result of our probation; as when we say to ourselves: If I go from bad to worse, if the sun of my earthly existence shall set amid the dark clouds of utter and dismal failure, the Father will not miss me when He comes in to see His guests; looking from one to another, doubtless He will say: "'Tis well; all are here for whom I care."

What infinite pains Christ took to prevent such questioning of the Divine compassion.

The lost are missed—always by God,

ordinarily by men, but not in every case. We cannot forget the elder brother, who, to his shame, did not at all share the intense feeling of his father.

Probably Christians nowadays are this much better than the older son in the parable: They do not object to their fellow Christians, who have wandered, coming back again to the Church and to the joys of the Christian life. And yet, in many a parish it seems as though the elder brother of the parable with his outcry has disappeared, and in his place has come an elder brother who does not care at all. Let the wanderer come back if he wills to do so. This new kind of brother will raise no objection to the music, the dancing, the slaying of the fatted calf, so long as *he* is not expected to sing or to dance or to make ready for the feast. In his selfish unconcernedness, the whole tragedy is to him a matter of supreme indifference. Is it he who has

thrown a shadow over the Father's love? In the Church can we expect men to believe that God misses them, if God's people miss them not at all? Say what we will, the Christian is the accepted interpreter of Christ.

XXII.

FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THIS great precept of to-day's Gospel, "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful," lifts the life of man in the world up to the throne of God in heaven.

So accustomed are we to associate the thought of right-doing with expediency —the mere avoiding of situations that are uncomfortable, the mere making of things to be agreeable and pleasant— that it taxes us severely to bring ourselves into line with Christ's appeal; which is that in framing our conduct we shall do what God does, and not do the things which are inconsistent with the divine character.

Yet surely our Lord is right—it must be so—in basing His appeal for virtue

strictly upon the character of God. This alone is immutable. The strength of other appeals may either wax or wane; the strength of this appeal never changes. In this matter of mercifulness, for example, whatever stimulus there may be for man in other and secondary considerations, the primary requisite, after all, is that man shall yield his will to the honest determination that he will do and will be, as he knows full well what God does and is. In short, obligation only shapes itself into definiteness and permanence, when the heart responds to the appeal of the Son of Man, "As your Father also."

The merciful spirit: we may almost fear to define it, lest we obscure it. Yet all know full well what it is: a great, splendid, divine virtue; mercy, pity, compassion, tenderness begotten of love; the kindliness in the heart which forbids to wound even the feelings of another; the delicate sensitiveness of soul

which leaps forth in sympathy for sorrow, in the relief of distress, and in the sharing of other's pain.

We cannot feign this. We cannot make men believe that we have it, if it be not genuine. It comes through union with God, and in no other way: "Merciful as your Father also is merciful."

We sometimes make ourselves believe that virtues which we lack, will come to us automatically, later on in life: for example, when we are old, or when our temporal outlook has changed for the better.

Least of all is this true of the merciful spirit.

Tender compassion is natural in earliest childhood, but is apt not to stay with us as we grow old. Advancing years bring trouble which turns a man's thought in upon himself, and easily makes him insensible to the pain of others.

Let no one say, with confidence: When I am wealthy, I will become merciful. The most splendid exhibitions of compassion are found probably among the poor, who not infrequently divide the last loaf, watch by one another's sick, and help to bury one another's dead. Increasing competence brings new interests, with added care, and removes a man from contact with those to whom he might sustain a relationship of help.

If we desire to be "merciful as our Father also is merciful," to wait for advancing years or for increased competence is but to encounter a graver difficulty.

We may look for definite foes to rise up in our pathway and seek to smite the merciful temper.

One of these foes is selfishness, which easily works itself out into an utter insensibility to the conditions which reign in the world. The selfish man

sees—must see—but he does not realize. He can behold the mental torture of another, without any spirit of compassion warming within him. Sometimes he can do great wrong—can torture, neglect, maltreat the weak, even his very own—without any apparent consciousness of harm.

Another foe to the compassionate spirit is lack of enterprise. Men wish to do kind things, but they are neither prompt nor resourceful in getting them under way. So the probation of life passes, for opportunity tarries not for the slothful.

XXIII.

FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

IN the attitude of Simon Peter toward the Christ, in the hour when the Lord laid upon him the constraint of his impending vocation, there is a lesson of exceeding usefulness.

What are the emotions that might naturally and properly seize the heart of a man, if he were suddenly brought into the presence of the Son of God? In the Gospel for this Sunday of Trinity-tide, we behold in such position one who was of mortal flesh like ourselves, and our attention fixes itself upon him with absorbing interest.

With a manifestation of supernatural power well calculated to impress fishermen, the Son of God invaded the pathway of the Galilean partners who were

to become His chosen men, His chief apostles. A great awe fell upon them, a conciousness of the touch of the invisible world of spirits, which Christ invariably stirred in hearts that were at all responsive.

Forthwith and irresistibly, two conflicting lines of emotion wrung the heart of the trembling Simon.

God's nearness unveiled, more vividly than ever before, the past evil of Simon Peter's life. He saw it now, and he saw it all. He might have said nothing, for the natural heart shrinks from confession; or he might have waited for Christ to speak, which perhaps would have eased in some measure his self-condemnation. But no; his nature was too intense and too honest for disguise, or even for delay. Speak he must, and speak he did. Milder natures, the self-satisfied especially, are astonished at the utter frankness of his words, so uncomplimentary to himself, apparently

so unappreciative of the Christ: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

We look again, and more closely, at the scene; and it dawns upon us that in the heart of Simon Peter all the while a tide of counter emotion is setting even more strongly in the opposite direction. He realizes the hopeless ruin of his life, if Christ shall take him at his word and depart forever. 'Tis a tender touch which St. Luke gives to the narrative, in assuring us that even while Simon Peter speaks the repelling words he clasps the form of the Son of Man, as if he fears in his heart that He may depart. Simon Peter does not draw back, stand at a distance, and wave Christ off. He falls down *at Jesus' knees,* saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

We must not idealize the apostles. They were men like unto ourselves. Their early years especially, we may

be sure, were marred by the sins which we commit.

In every way, therefore, is this narrative of the Trinity-tide Gospel for our instruction and example. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." It ill becomes us to approach Christ condescendingly, as though there might be a mutual profit in the mutual acquaintanceship.

Consciousness of sin alone enables man to know Christ and to appreciate Him. He whose honest impulse is to cry "depart," is always the man to grasp most firmly the feet of the Son of Man.

To those who come as Simon Peter came—overwhelmed with the consciousness of guilt, keeping back nothing, crying "depart" and yet clinging—to all such especially the heart of the Son of God goes out with love irresistible and compassion infinite.

XXIV.

FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE portion of the Sermon on the Mount, from which this Sunday's Gospel is taken, establishes the fact, so easily forgotten, that the right life must stand both true to God and true to man.

There were men in our Blessed Lord's time, the Pharisees, who believed and taught that excess of zeal in one of these directions amply atones for lack of zeal in the other direction: for example, that one can do almost anything he chooses to his fellow-men, if only he warms up comfortably toward God.

Christ unqualifiedly reproves this religion of the Pharisees; not, however, as being altogether wrong, but rather as being essentially deficient. Such righteousness as theirs must be exceeded

by His followers. The Christian must not say, as did the rabbis, "If my hand be restrained from killing, the law of my God is sufficiently fulfilled." Back of the hand restrained from violence, must lie the heart attuned to positive love for humanity, through the "wholeness" and the soundness of its union with God.

In short, true to God and true to man; neither one apart from the other, and each in fulness because of the other!

Christ illustrates. A man comes to the altar, bringing a gift for his God. He there remembers that his brother has something against him. Shall he proceed with his act of religious devotion? Clear and distinct is the Master's answer: "No. Leave the gift. Be reconciled. Then come again."

Soundness toward God and soundness toward man are in reality component and inseparable parts of the one

healthful disposition. We bring our gift to the one, in a receptacle which represents the quality of our attitude toward the other. Our relationship to man forms in a sense the basis of our approach to God. Our relationship to God forms in a sense the basis of our approach to man. Whichever way we turn, therefore, whether to God or to man, seeking to render a loving service, in either case the initial enquiry of our heart must be, Are we true to the absent one, whether again he be God or man?

The character condemned, and therefore to be avoided, is the unsymmetrical character, over-developed in one direction and shrunken in the other. As an example of such deficiency, on the one side, stands the Pharisee of all ages, zealous toward God but neglectful of man.

The pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. It is possible, if our Lord were speaking to-day, that He

might illustrate His appeal for the well-rounded character, by reproving the mistake of the Pharisee's opposite, more often met with at the present time: the man who is considerately mindful of his fellows but shamefully neglectful of God. The example of such deficiency Christ does not describe, but leaves us to discover for ourselves; and we need not look far. It is the merely humane man, a striking product of present-day civilization, who offers his gift to humanity with utter forgetfulness of God, who turns to his neighbor but comes not at all to the altar, who seeks compassionately the Father's children without effort or desire "first to be reconciled" to the Father himself. For all such let us hear and heed the clear word of the Master: "This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

XXV.

FOR THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

IN the Epistle for this Sunday of the Trinity-tide, we come face to face with the arresting words: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Such are the issues of our probation in the world, and such is the inevitable choice from which for none of us is there possible escape: either a wage of death, earned; or else a dower of life, bestowed as an unearned gift by "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The great lesson of St. Paul's appeal is, of course, the fearful consequence of this inevitable choice. But there is a subordinate lesson in his words, the

heeding or the forgetting of which must exceedingly influence a man at every stage of his career; it is the lesson of the contrasted words, "wage" and "gift."

We may earn death, but we cannot earn life. We may receive eternal life as a free and undeserved gift from our Heavenly Father; but death is in no sense His gift, for we alone may bring this upon ourselves.

It is difficult to say, which of the two is on the more dangerous ground: the man who wilfully sins, and persuades himself that the evil he does is done under divine compulsion, and therefore does not deserve death; or the man who confidently expects to win eternal life through the slender merits of his own imperfect righteousness.

The influences involved in St. Paul's distinction between death as a wage and life as a gift, are not speculative and intellectual merely, but are seriously practical for all of us.

On the one hand is the danger that we may so misunderstand sin, our relation to it and God's relation to it, that we will hold with the fatalist, that we may sin exceedingly and still richly deserve eternal life. "This is the excellent foppery of the world! that when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeit of our own behavior), we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on." (King Lear). Over against this fatalistic view, stands the clear-cut declaration of St. Paul, that the wage of sin is death. What comes to man as a wage, is not thrust upon him against his will. It is his very own; he has earned it.

On the other hand is the danger that we may so misread the Gospel, and may

so exaggerate the worth of our own righteousness, as to aspire to eternal life on the ground that we deserve it as a wage, and need not therefore humble ourselves to receive it as a gift.

Of the two dangers depicted, the latter probably more confronts the men of our day and age. If a man is outrageously wicked, ordinarily with the thief upon the cross he is willing to acknowledge, "we receive the due reward of our deeds." But there are multitudes, very far from perfect, and yet so confident of the exceeding worth of their slender righteousness, that eternal life seems to them but a wage, which through their own merit they have won already and with the utmost ease. To all such, as to the self-satisfied of the long ago, this is the pleading remonstrance of the unappreciated Christ: "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life!"

XXVI.

FOR THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

IF our heart appreciates their inmost and utmost bearing, we shrink back uneasily from the concluding words of this Sunday's Gospel: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."

The mere saying of "Lord, Lord," a feeble outcry when ill fortune looms upon our horizon: can we deny, must we not acknowledge, that Christ's description does quite adequately picture the modicum of religion which there is in many lives?

And yet, on the other hand, how stupendous for any man is the difficulty which inheres in our Lord's alternative:

Honestly and faithfully to do on earth the will of the "Father which is in heaven!"

God's will and our life: has anyone of us thought along this line sufficiently? Is it conceivable, even after years of conventional discipleship, that we may need to be brought to this thought anew and abruptly, and that there is in it for us a possibility of the exhilarating impulse of a new discovery?

"Some years ago," writes one who had long been a teacher of religion, "on a certain Sunday morning I sat in the corner of the village church at ———. The preacher took for his subject 'Every Human Life a Plan of God.' I remember distinctly the subject, though I do not recall the text, or anything that was said particularly. 'Every human life a plan of God': at the recital of these words my thought went back, over hills and valleys, until it rested in

a distant cottage, where my eyes first saw the light of day. Then I asked: 'Is it possible, that on that morning, by the side of that little new-born life, God stood, asking to govern it and to be its guide? A moment later I sank on my knees, and began to pray: O Lord, I am sorry that I had no one to tell me this long ago: forgive the mistakes of the past; draw me this morning into the circle of Thy plan, and keep me there.' While I am conscious of many blunders since, I am conscious also that I have been constantly helped by that which came to me then as something hitherto unrealized: 'God's will and my life!' "

"He that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven": these words of our Lord compel us to realize that God's will has indeed for every man's life a plan, a path straight and narrow to be travelled, if he would "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

We look back and we trace with sor-

rowful clearness two distinct lines: the straight line of God's will, and the wavering line of our imperfect obedience. Never for long have those lines coincided. Often have they crossed one another abruptly, when the departure of our will from God's will was conscious and determined. Then, perhaps we crept back wounded and scarred into the shelter of the divine compassion, and sought hopefully to start again. Sometimes, perhaps for a long while, we simply did not care, and with no resistance were borne headlong, any whither, by evil impulse. More than likely, the two lines have most diverged, when, in the deceptive phrase of the world, "all went well with us."

From whence this tragedy of imperfect obedience, which makes us content to cry "Lord, Lord," and put forth no determined effort to do the will of our Father which is in heaven?

Have our souls yet grasped the clear conception of the divine solicitude: God's will, and our will; God's plan, and our life?

XXVII.

FOR THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

IN the closing words of this Sunday's Epistle, we have St. Paul's answer to a question which has distressed many hearts: Does God keep faith with tempted men? Perhaps we have been moved to ask this question at times when we were not strong enough to answer as did St. Paul, "God is faithful." Wisely, therefore, may we give attention to the facts confidently affirmed, not forgetting that when he wrote to his Corinthian converts, the apostle addressed himself to men who were daily exposed to the fiercest temptation of the corruptest paganism.

The Corinthians were to remember, and we must remember, that no temptation has taken any one of us "but such as is common to man." God, then,

has not singled us out for a conflict, the very novelty of which means for us inevitable failure. Good and faithful people, from the beginning and in every age, through divine grace have triumphed over the temptations which beset us.

We must not misunderstand St. Paul's words, "common to man." Someone might say: "My temptation is the same that has overcome multitudes; why shall I be expected to do better than others have done, to succeed where others have failed; what wonder that a sin which has slain its thousands shall gain the mastery over me?"

This is not St. Paul's thought in the words "common to man." He points us, not to the many who have failed, but to the glorious company of the high and noble who have fought and achieved the victory, who have wrestled and overcome. They have conquered, and so may we.

Again, God does not permit men to be "tempted above that they are able." St. Paul thus makes bold to picture the Heavenly Father as painstakingly familiar with our character, our environment, our ability to resist; as determined under no circumstances to permit temptation to assail us which shall overreach our capacity for conflict. We must remember, however, that the words, "that we are able," do not indicate what may be easily done, but take for granted the employment of our utmost ability, with the favoring help of God.

Once again, St. Paul bids us remember that for every man alongside temptation God has placed "*the* way of escape." This is of course, the Christ, who declared Himself to be "the Way." In our sacramental union with Him not only may we "obtain mercy," but also may we "find grace to help in time of need."

Courage, then, soldiers of the Cross! "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Especially may we remember that strength comes through resistance, and that for each one of us strength is measured according to the power of our conquered enemy.

We may well conclude with the golden words of St. Augustine:

"The conquering commander triumpheth; yet had he not conquered unless he had fought. And the more peril there was in the battle, so much the more joy there is in the triumph.

"The storm tosses the sailor and threatens shipwreck. Sky and sea are calmed; and they are exceeding joyed, as having been in exceeding danger.

"Everywhere and forever it is true, that the greater joy is ushered in by the greater pain."

XXVIII.

FOR THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

IN the opening words of to-day's Epistle we behold St. Peter in great anxiety of mind, lest his converts, those whom he has brought to Christ, shall permit themselves to be "ignorant concerning spiritual gifts."

Is there ground for such anxiety on our behalf? More, it would seem, in our case than in the case of Christians at the beginning; for our lot has fallen in an age of conspicuous material triumph, a day in which the splendor of man's outward achievement has well nigh eclipsed within him the field of spiritual attainment.

"Concerning spiritual gifts, I would not have you ignorant"; let us heed these words of St. Paul. Let us steadily seek the knowledge which he

commends; lest, though we be Christians, nevertheless it be said to our shame, that concerning spiritual gifts we are ignorant; ignorant of the fact that there are such possessions; ignorant of the fact that they are of transcendent value; ignorant of the fact that they are God's gift, and therefore must be sought from Him; ignorant of the fact that they are given, not solely for the glory of the individual, but also and especially for "the edifying of the body of Christ."

There *are,* then, spiritual gifts. Let us not be ignorant of their existence and their reality. Elsewhere St. Paul enumerates them, in stately sequence: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance!"

Let us not be ignorant as to the superior value of these spiritual gifts: how much greater and better they are than the good things of the body. The

man who possesses one of these gifts is a rich man. The man who possesses two, is a millionaire. The man who has them all, is rich beyond the possibility of computation.

If the spiritual gifts are superior to material possessions, then are they for the Christian the standard by which wealth is to be measured. The rich men of our communities are the men who have spiritual gifts. Not to perceive this, is to fall into the ignorance which St. Paul deplores.

Let us not be unmindful of the fact, that these good things of the spirit are God's gift. They are to be sought, therefore, not from ourselves but from God, not in the world but in the Church. They are not natural endowments; they are gifts of divine grace. We may miss them altogether, we may live and die without them, except we abide in Christ.

Heed in this matter the testimony of

the Litany: "That it may please Thee to give to all Thy people increase of grace to hear meekly Thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection," that they may "bring forth the fruits of the Spirit!"

Finally, not solely for the glory of the individual, but "for the edifying" (the up-building) "of the body of Christ": let us not be ignorant as to the wide purpose with which these gifts are given by God.

For the common good; for the advantage of all; "for the edifying of the body of Christ!"

XXIX.

FOR THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

MIDWAY in this Sunday's Epistle stand words which flow from St. Paul's pen like a sob from the human voice: "I persecuted the Church of God!"

St. Paul could forgive the Jews for persecuting him; toward them he harbored no resentment whatsoever; but as regards himself the fleeting years diminished not at all the bitterness of the accusing recollection: "I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." God had forgiven the sin, committed in ignorance—this St. Paul could not possibly doubt—but the inherent wrong of it so magnified itself in the apostle's mind, that it seemed to him an obligation to

keep the wound fresh, purposely so, as a permanent and willing penance which his enlightened conscience had taught him that faith demands.

Who nowadays deems it a serious sin that ignorantly, or even of set purpose, he has persecuted the Church?

Why do many men of the Kingdom, when estimating the ill that they may have done in years gone by, pass lightly over in themselves that which St. Paul regarded as so serious a sin in himself?

The whole matter depends upon the estimation in which the Church is held.

If the Church be but a voluntary society in which men are brought together for purposes of mutual improvement, to raise one's hand against it, or against any of its members, is scarcely more than a breach of charity. If on the other hand the Church be, as St. Paul believed, the Body of Christ, then the sin of opposing it, of persecuting its

members or seeking to impede its progress, is a crime akin to that of Belshazzar, of whom it is said that he had lifted himself against God.

Such, we may be sure, was the light in which St. Paul regarded the sin of his early years; and this is the reason why it seemed to him so well nigh unforgivable. The face of St. Stephen, for whose death he had given his voice and vote, never ceased to haunt St. Paul; but, even more, the face of Christ looked reproachfully upon him from the picture which forced itself upon his vision, at each recurrence of the thought that he had persecuted the Church. With knowledge of the fact that the Church is the body of Christ, had come to St. Paul a distressing realization that in lifting his hand against the Church, he had in very truth lifted his hand against God Himself. "Least of the apostles, not meet to be called an apostle!"

Surely there is a restraining thought for us in this unhappiness of St. Paul. We, too, as well as he, have to do with the Church. Shall we bring to it the tender and unswerving devotion which befits a man in his relationship to the Body of Christ? Or shall we lift ourselves against God by persecuting the Church; which, alas! may be done, not merely through open violence but in other and less conspicuous ways: by neglect, by inappreciation, by a disloyal discipleship, by the holding in light esteem those heavenly treasures which Christ has purchased for us in blood and sorrow upon the cross?

Men come to the end of their earthly journey, with much to remember which they must wish had never been. So will it be with us, inevitably. Let us then realize, while now the thought may restrain and guide us, that St. Paul unveiled a situation which possesses the keenest power of torture, when he wrote

these words to his Corinthian converts: "Least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God!"

XXX.

FOR THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

WHY did the Son of God sigh, when He gave the command which bestowed hearing and speech upon the deaf-mute of Decapolis?

We can at least conjecture that in this sigh of our Blessed Lord, whatever else there may have been, there was quite certainly the commingling of three emotions: sympathy, sorrow, and apprehensiveness.

Christ had pity upon the deaf-mute and sighed from sympathy. As He looked into that sorrowful face, there came into the heart of the compassionate Master an overwhelming appreciation of the weight of misery which this afflicted man had long borne. Without hearing and without speech,

among men but not with them, isolated, alone, separated by his infirmities from all natural contact with his fellows: a terrible affliction; a cross, the weight of which they only can realize who have been called to bear it! We may be sure that it was a sigh of sympathy.

And a sigh of disappointed sorrow also, as Sadler suggests.

"Instances like this of relief vouchsafed, so few in comparison with what He could have performed if men generally had received Him, brought before the soul of Christ most feelingly the great mass of misery which they represented, but which owing to men's rejection of Himself He was not able to alleviate."

"The deaf may hear the Saviour's voice;
The fettered tongue its chain may break;
But the deaf heart, the dumb by choice,
The laggard soul that will not wake,
The guilt that scorns to be forgiven;
These baffle e'en the power of heaven."

Once again and especially, it seems to us that this was a sigh of anxious apprehensiveness.

Our Blessed Lord knew the possibilities of misuse which would beset these gifts, into the possession of which the deaf-mute was about to enter. Would he employ these faculties aright? Would he seek the grace which alone could issue in a chastened restraint?

The tongue of this man of Decapolis was to be unloosed. Would it be to him in all respects an instrument of heaven, ministering only to the edification of his soul and the glory of God? After its long silence of innocence, would this loosened tongue catch the infection of bad example, and learn the fatal secret of blasphemy, of lying, of slander, of evil communication?

The unstopped ears—would they also become instruments of evil?

We who have sinned so much through

speech and hearing, wonder not that our Blessed Master sighed as He opened the ear and loosed the tongue of the deaf-mute of Decapolis. He knew—He must have known—that the gracious gifts about to be bestowed might occasion their recipient the sorrow of great spiritual loss. And yet He bestowed these gifts, confident that in His kingdom a sufficient grace could be found to guide the recipient aright in their use and exercise.

Christ sighed, but He did not withhold the boon. "Freely, ungrudgingly, were His miracles of love performed. To deny powers and their exercise on the ground that they may be abused, is not the divine method. There is a remedy for the evils which accompany this freedom in the conferring of an additional and guiding gift. The tongue is loosed; the ear is unstopped also. While He bestows the faculty of speech, He bestows also the power to hear those

glad and soul-elevating principles of righteousness and forgiveness and love, which will fill the loosened tongue with joy, and put a new song of praise in that long silent mouth."

"O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee: Mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

XXXI.

FOR THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE wonderful parable of the Good Samaritan is an epitome, a faithful and complete outline, of the Gospel. We behold humanity in the wayfarer who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. We behold Christ in the Good Samaritan who came where this wounded man was, bound up his wounds, and brought him to an inn. The inn is the Church, in which it is the will of God that wounded humanity shall be cared for, nursed, watched over, brought back again to life and health.

To the keeper of the inn two pence were given, with an added injunction as to spending more, should occasion require it. The Good Samaritan was de-

termined to have the man well, however long it took, and however much it cost. We read between the lines: Take care of this man unweariedly; bring all resources into play; think not to cease effort when the two pence are exhausted; if occasion requires it, spend more, spend to the utmost.

The injunction as to spending more has a bearing, by no means fanciful, upon the work of the Church and the administration of parishes.

The building of a house of worship, the maintenance of divine service, the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments: these are the two pence, which stand for established and customary ministration. These come first, of course. It must not enter into our thought even to fly to new expedients, so long as the two pence are not used to their utmost advantage.

Suppose, however, the two pence are faithfully used—the church built, the

services maintained, the sacraments regularly administered — and apparently little or no impression is made upon the wounded humanity near at hand, to whom the heart of Christ goes out with yearning tenderness.

Under such circumstances the parable not only permits, but actually enjoins, a drawing vigorously upon other resources, which the Divine Master may have had in mind when He said, "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

The Church lives in her likeness to her Lord. He did not set up His standard, and expect men to find Him, with no effort on His part to seek them. In the tender language of St. Luke, He "went about doing good." And yet, how much there is of sheer indolence among the baptized: the spirit that cares not for the outcast, and can behold unmoved the perishing of multitudes.

We often wonder why the Church is

not a greater power in our communities; why more wounded souls do not yield themselves to her healing influence. The door of the Father's House is open; the church bell is rung; the worship, regularly maintained, is surely edifying. The two pence are vigorously used; and yet—and yet—

Well, are we spending more? Are we mindful of our responsibility, if occasion requires it, to put forth unwearied personal effort on behalf of individual men?

For the Church of the Living God to expend the two pence of appointed and orderly ministration and refuse to spend more—for the baptized in our parishes to worship contentedly in half-empty churches, with no thought, no plan, of going into the highways to win the perishing multitude—this surely is contrary to the expectation of the Divine Master, who entrusts His wounded children to His Church's care, not only

with the two pence which are ordinarily sufficient, but also with the added words of solicitous entreaty, "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

XXXII.

FOR THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

WHEN St. Paul wrote to his Galatian converts: "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law," he gave his answer to the question: To what extent can it be maintained that for the Christian the Ten Commandments set forth "the whole duty of man?" A problem of permanent importance; for, although many men still fall below the literal requirements of the Decalogue, others, it must be acknowledged, sadly curtail their efforts in the field of righteousness, out of an indolent conviction that upon Sinai was spoken God's final word as to human conduct.

At first thought it staggers us to hear

St. Paul say, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Not under the law: how can this be true of anyone, especially of the Christian? It is not true of the Christian, as implying that he is released from such degree of moral obedience as was exacted of God's ancient people. The Ten Commandments are not abrogated for the Christian. This we may regard as settled by the words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount; where He insists that there is murder in hatred and adultery in impure desire; where, as covering the whole matter, He declares once and for all that He has come, not to destroy but to fulfil, to fill out, to fill full, the law.

What then, does St. Paul mean by the words, "Not under the law"? Plainly this: that the Christian is summoned to something infinitely beyond a mere literal compliance with a law which says "Thou shalt not." Led of the Spirit, he is above the law, not under it.

He is expected to have mastered the law, with its merely negative requirement, and to have passed joyfully on to the love, the devotion, the sacrifice, the service, of a life that is "hid with Christ in God." "Under the law" can no more be said to express the vocation, the whole obligation, of the Christian, than the whole obligation of a mother can be thought to consist in her refraining from acts of violence toward her offspring.

The Church, however, has wisely ordained that her children shall not be taught to say, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," until they have first learned the Ten Commandments. Her emphasis is removed from the Decalogue, only when the man to whom she speaks has learned to keep the Decalogue.

We may well ask—here is the gist of St. Paul's message—is it enough for the

Christian, dowered with the fulness of divine grace, merely to refrain from open violation of the literal requirement of the Ten Commandments? Assuredly not. He may to his shame remain forever "under the law," steadfastly refusing to be "led of the Spirit"; just as a child might permanently remain in the First Reader, thinking himself worthy to be praised for diligence rather than chided for indolence.

Who learns the alphabet for its own sake? It is of value only when made use of in the strife for further knowledge. How inadequate a description of the Christ it would be to say that He killed not, He committed no adultery, neither did He steal.

The law is a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." "Christ is the end" (the *terminus ad quem*) "of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Therefore "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law";

ye are not released from it; but ye have mastered it; ye have passed beyond it. Let the same "mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

XXXIII.

FOR THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THESE words of Christ, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," are the climax of an entire section of the Sermon on the Mount.

Our Blessed Lord looked out upon a civilization in many respects the counterpart of our own. Materialism had the upper hand; not always in its grosser forms, yet clutching at the throat of men to make them miserable. The poor are anxious over their poverty; the rich over their riches. Food and raiment were like tyrants, before whom almost everybody bowed: the poor grasping for the little which might enable them to be fed and clothed at all; the rich eager for the sumptuous fare and the gay clothing that might min-

ister to their gluttony and pride. Into these conditions religion entered, either not at all, or else so slightly that men everywhere stood convicted of serving two masters: the world writ large, and God writ small.

To draw men away from a life of such slender satisfaction, Christ first showed the utter impotence of man after all to handle alone the material forces of life. Fret as he will, he cannot feed himself as certainly as God feeds the fowls of the air. Fret as he will, he cannot clothe himself as certainly as God clothes the grass of the field. His dyed garments are but a poor imitation of the glory of the lily. His barns may be empty, while the birds have plenty. Even his body defies his control, since no one has power to add at will either to the height or to the health of his physical frame.

As these great truths, thus poetically expressed, fall from the lips of Christ,

not only do we behold the utter inability of man to care for himself unaided, but also God comes back into His universe, ready and willing to help man find the things that are needful for the body.

That which men are tempted to put first, must therefore fall back and take second place in the field of man's anxiety, since it is secure in the providence of God.

Thus the way is prepared for our Blessed Lord's unveiling of the secret of the happy life. Something must be brought in to take the first place in man's heart, thus vacated. What shall it be? The answer falls from the lips of the Son of man, like the clear note of a silver bell, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Christ does not call men to a mere spirit of resignation. He crowns His description of the happy life with a precept which begins with the exhilarating word "seek." Right here many

people break down and fall short in their effort to follow Christ. They school themselves to resignation over the disappointments of life; but they do not rouse themselves to recognize the fact that they are released from the tyranny of earthly interests, with expectation upon Christ's part that they will give themselves, heart and soul, to "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

May we regard resignation as more than a minor virtue in the Christian life? Surely it was not primarily for this that Christ came; and the most debilitating hymn that men can sing is "Oh! to be nothing." Christ came to establish a kingdom, worthy of every man's keenest devotion; a kingdom to live for and to die for; to despise which, or to hold it in light esteem, is a crime upon the soul of man. God has the right to expect that men will seek His kingdom with suitable enthusiasm.

Christ's secret of the happy life; the youngest child can easily comprehend it. Cease worrying, and trust God. Forget self, in the glory of a splendid enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. This must be the life of highest happiness; since thus to live, is in reality to share God's life in the world.

XXXIV.

FOR THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE miracle at Nain has for us many lessons: not least of which is the tender statement of St. Luke concerning the young man raised from the dead: that our Blessed Lord "delivered him to his mother."

If we study the miracle in quest of spiritual instruction, if we regard the restoration from death to life as a figure of the sinner's return to righteousness through Christ, the delivery of the young man to his mother may be to us a reminder of how the Lord of Life entrusts His penitents to the Church, with expectation that they will be tenderly received, watched over, and cared for, in His name and for His sake. Let us in our parishes, whether we be priest or

people, do our utmost to have it so; that the restored life of Christ's penitent ones may be nourished and cherished through the sustained warmth of the maternal solicitude which awaits them in the Church.

Then there is this other lesson: the deepening of paternal responsibility in the home, on behalf of every child sent back from the borderland of death, in response to "the prayer of faith."

A son lies at the point of death. The prayers of a family ascend to the throne of grace, that God will be merciful and will spare the life. Through "the wonderful goodness" of Him "who bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up again," heaviness is turned to joy, and the child recovers.

As Christ delivered the young man of Nain to his mother, so the child thus providentially restored to health and strength is given anew to his parents, with a deepened responsibility upon

their part, not always realized sufficiently, and not always remembered for long.

Life so graciously and perhaps unexpectedly prolonged: how sacred; how different from life under ordinary circumstances! Does not lofty purpose befit such grant of added years; and shall not they who have prayed for the boon, tax themselves to the utmost that it may be as God reasonably expects?

Sometimes parents are elated merely over the recovery of their children from sickness. They have prayed in their extremity; but their thankfulness has the ring of unreality. Christ delivers the loved one, well and strong again, to his mother; but somehow the mother does not see Christ; she does not encourage herself to believe that God has had much to do after all with the blessing which comes so graciously into her life. There is, in short, no suitable dedication to God of that which, under

the circumstances, should seem to be His only, and His wholly.

Not infrequently a child is sent back to pleading parents, and grows to a miserable manhood, through sheer neglect upon the part of those who should love him tenderly and rear him prayerfully, because he is still theirs only through God's exceeding mercy.

Better the grave in infancy than the loss of an immortal soul.

In this whole matter of sickness and recovery, the facts to be devoutly remembered are these: 'Tis Christ who gives back the loved one; He delivers him into the hands of those who henceforth must bear a great responsibility; and they who heretofore have prayed, must not cease to pray, as they pass out from under the cloud of affliction into the glorious sunlight of an abundant peace and happiness.

XXXV.

FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

WE read in this Sunday's Gospel that "Jesus went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread"; and we are sure that His gracious act was prompted by the desire to help and to save a soul.

Our Blessed Lord's catholicity of effort to save the lost was a rude shock to His cotemporaries; and even now, here and there, His Church is tempted to lose the impulse of His example, and revert to the type and pattern of Jewish insularity.

We may illustrate, by noting the contrast between our Lord and His forerunner, the last of the prophets. We do not read of John Baptist seeking any forlorn or lost soul. He planted him-

self in the wilderness. The people—or such of them as were earnest minded—sought him, came where he was; and such as came he helped. We simply cannot imagine John Baptist, out of sheer love for a despised soul, entering a Pharisee's house to sit down at meat with him.

And yet, our Blessed Lord, when chided with the contrast between Himself and His forerunner, declared that "wisdom is justified of her children": in other words, so far as John Baptist is concerned, all that he did was well and right, in him, under the circumstances, and in view of what was appointed him to do.

John Baptist was the last prophet of an expiring dispensation. Judaism made no converts—it was forbidden to do so—lest the holy seed should be defiled by contact with the ungodly. In John Baptist, therefore, it was natural and right that he should set up his

standard in the wilderness, should receive only such of the people as sought him, and should not bestir himself overmuch on behalf of those who were remote from his influence. Of him, the child of wisdom, wisdom was justified.

Christ came; and the attention of men passed from the King's messenger to the King. How great the contrast in all respects, under the wider purpose of the Incarnation: John Baptist in the wilderness, Christ in the cities and villages of Judæa and Galilee; John Baptist found of men, Christ finding men; the people, or certain of them, leaving their homes and going out to John, Christ seeking the people in their homes with intense anxiety to save the lost.

We wonder not that the Calvinistic theology has sadly obscured the Catholic conception of Christ's kingdom. The Puritan idea of the Church, an invisible Church, is that of an elect body, a select

few, chosen from the perishing millions to constitute God's family in the world. Since, according to this theory, the Church is the elect and the elect were chosen at the beginning, there is not the slightest danger that any one of this number will fail to find his way to the kingdom. No one, therefore, need be troubled or anxious for his brother. Wherever the standard is set up, even though it be in the remotest wilderness, the elect will flow to it automatically. As for the non-elect, they can do nought but like Judas go to their own place.

Not so restricted was the purpose of the Incarnation: in proof of which, and as sufficient assurance of what the Church should be, we appeal confidently to the life of Christ in the world. He went anywhither, and everywhither, to seek and to save the lost. This He did, even with the loss of reputation to Himself: "the Friend of sinners!" He was a townsman, not a wilderness-

dweller. Without waiting for men to find Him, He sought them in their homes, as One tremendously anxious to help them to the utmost.

Shall we not ask: To what extent do our parishes interpret this will of Christ, as to what we may rightly call the Catholic conception of His Church?

XXXVI.

FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

WHAT was the thought in St. Paul's mind, when he besought his Corinthian converts so to order their lives, that it might be evident they "came behind in no gift"? What is it, according to the apostle's view, to come behind in gifts? Is it to falter and fail in one's benevolence toward the Church; to have, and not to give for the support of the Gospel and the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world?

Elsewhere, St. Paul strenously maintains the obligation of the Christian to be "rich toward God." Here, however, his mind travels in another direction, and the burdening thought that rests heavily upon his soul, is one of fear lest men of the kingdom shall fail in

readiness to receive *God's gifts,* freely offered them in the Church, which is the body of Christ.

We are in danger of not thinking enough along this line. Our parishes seem to us poor—we say that they are poor—when the baptized within them withhold from God the material gifts which are sorely needed for the Church's maintenance. True indeed, sorrowfully true; and yet there is another poverty, more grievous still: the poverty of a parish in which God's people "come behind" in readiness to receive God's gifts.

Here we touch upon the primary and fundamental purpose of the Church; which is not so much to enrich herself with men's gifts, as it is to enrich men with God's gifts. How difficult it is to induce people to receive the precious things which God offers them in His Church: the gift of heavenly knowledge, the joy of worship, the privilege

of prayer which is the soul's breath of life, sacramental union with Christ, repentance together with a methodical system for its exercise, forgiveness, restraint, discipline, a field for devotion and consecrated service. Not to value these priceless treasures which are offered in the Church—to behold them, and to turn away from them—is to "come behind in gifts" to the ruin of our souls, and thus to help impoverish the Kingdom of God in the world.

And yet, even of the baptized, many see no guilt in their thus coming behind in gifts. According to their view, what God offers, man may either accept or reject, and no harm done. Heavenly gifts appear to them mere matters of taste, and therefore legitimate matters of choice. 'Tis a sufficient reply to say that this cannot be true, because of the solemn fact that the scroll of man's opportunity in these matters is written upon with the finger of God dipped, as

it were, in the blood of Christ: "If I had not come and spoken unto them; . . . . If I had not done among them the works which none other man did!"

Probably there is no difficulty which confronts the Church, no alarming outlook which assails the parish, no unhappiness or unrest in the family-life of any Christian, which does not find a sufficient explanation in the sorrowful fact, that someone, or some responsible body of people, has come behind in gifts. It is the way of the world—it is the danger which confronts all tempted men, and all communities as well—not to appreciate the help that inheres in the Incarnation, to come behind in thankful reception of God's gifts, and thus to impoverish the life or the institution which otherwise would have been rich in the sight of heaven.

XXXVII.

FOR THE NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE great Epistle for this Sunday of the Trinity-tide claims our devout attention, not merely as a valuable enumeration of commendable virtues, but rather and especially as St. Paul's answer to the questions: What is "applied Christianity"; how must the faith manifest its power, in influence upon the life of the Christian believer?

The apostle writes, not to the unevangelized, but to the baptized. He reminds his Ephesian converts that in the laver of regeneration they have "put off the old man," and have been renewed, have "put on the new man," through the Spirit. Moral duties therefore rest upon them, which are but the natural and necessary result of

their baptismal engrafting into the Body of Christ.

Scarcely anywhere else in his epistles is St. Paul so direct and specific as here. His appeal is to the baptized, and at the start for the most part negative: Put away lying; avoid corrupt communication; sin not in respect to anger; steal not; shut the door against the devil; grieve not the Holy Ghost; put away bitterness and wrath, anger and clamor, evil speaking and malice.

Then, at the close, discipline melts into privilege, and restraint vanishes before opportunity. The avoidance of evil gives way to a glorious vision of positive and overwhelming love: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

We may profitably tarry over these words of apostolic counsel. Let us question ourselves, and examine our lives, on the lines indicated.

Our baptismal engrafting into the Body of Christ: does it bear fruit within us unto "righteousness and true holiness"?

Are we, as Christians, rid of those sins which St. Paul first enumerates: those "actual transgressions," the things of dishonesty, which may blot and mar the life which should be "hid with Christ in God"?

If so, God be praised; but this is not all. Having ceased to do evil, have we learned to do well? Do we stand true to men, in positive manifestation of the spirit of Christ?

Are we "kind one to another"; that is, are we outwardly courteous to all men, remembering that they and we are brethren through the redemption which Christ has purchased?

In this matter of kindness, are we above reproach as to motive and inward feeling? Does our concern for others spring from a genuine tenderness of

heart, such as manifested itself in the Christ-life?

Then, finally, the supreme test: our kindness, begotten of tender-heartedness, does it extend itself even to those who have done, or who wish, us evil? Do we "forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven" us?

The greatness of this Sunday's Epistle will surely manifest itself to us, if we approach it with honest desire to be led into the inner sanctuary of the Christian life. But it cannot be expected to yield us help, except we are anxious to know and to do the will of God.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

XXXVIII.

FOR THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE parable of the Vineyard and the parable of the Marriage-feast terminate alike in the ominous words: "Many are called, but few chosen."

When in theology, or in our practical study of the problems of life, we come face to face with the terms "called" or "chosen," we find ourselves in the midst of bewildering controversy.

On the one hand, out of the past rises before us the spectral form of the New England Calvinist, who annihilated all distinction between κλητός and ἐκλεκτός; in whose view "the called" and "the chosen" were bodies coterminous. To harmonize this theory with the parable of the Vineyard and the

parable of the Marriage-feast, required violence to their central teaching: either the narrowing of "the called" to the exclusion of the unfaithful, or else the extension of "the chosen" to the inclusion of the unfaithful. In either case, the parables were stripped of meaning, and God was robbed of reputation. This was the practical outcome: Many (or, more likely, a few) are called, and the very same many or few alone are chosen.

Then came the reaction from Calvinism, under which multitudes plunged headlong into the Universalism which practically pervades almost all Protestant bodies to-day. In the face of Christ's protest, κλητός and ἐκλεκτός were again merged. The parables once more needed revision. God was made to say, again with loss of reputation: "Give wages to everyone, to worker and non-worker, even to the man who has stoutly refused to enter My vineyard at

all. Keep the supper waiting, till all men shall be forced to receive it, even the unwilling, even the men who have reviled My bounty; for every one is called, and every one is chosen!"

Yet Christ made distinction between "the called" and "the chosen"; to annihilate which is no man's privilege, either in the interest of a theology accounted logical, or in the interest of a blind compassion which would abolish all ethical distinction.

The parables of the Vineyard and of the Marriage-feast vindicate alike the divine mercy and the divine justice; both of which are essential attributes of Deity.

"The called" are they to whom the opportunity of the Gospel comes; and they are many. Neither of these parables touches the problem of the unevangelized, who in Holy Scripture are left to the tender mercy of a just God. The parables under consideration are

parables of grace; they speak the needed lesson of man's responsibility, in view of the Incarnation. "Many are called," compassionately, yea, tenderly. None are rejected at the last who have met the call of the Gospel with becoming appreciation. If the larger body of "the called" narrows pitifully into a smaller body of "the chosen," yet will we remember that God does not desire to have it so. The only constraint which the Incarnation forbears to lay upon man, is the constraint that would coerce and compel man's free-will.

"Many called, few chosen!" The lesson of these ominous words is an appeal for man's appreciation of the response which the Incarnation deserves and most reasonably demands. The divine election in the first instance—the only election with which we have now to do—is the call to obedience, to sacrifice, to service, to practical and sustained appreciation of our opportunity

in Christ, so to order our lives that we may at last be found "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

XXXIX.

FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

HOW strenuous a matter is human life in the world, for the Christian, according to St. Paul's view of it in the Epistle read from our altars today.

Do we sufficiently realize the fact, that of all figures employed in the New Testament to describe that to which we are called in Christ Jesus, the military figure stands easily first? Whatever else the Christian may be—husbandman, toiler in the vineyard, athlete—always in the sight of God, as in the Word of God, he is and must be a soldier. Accordingly, in this Sunday's Epistle, we are bidden to "put on the whole armour of God," to take "the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit." It is

throughout a picture of the soldier carefully making ready for the battle. And not a soldier handicapped by self-trust; for St. Paul is extremely careful to add to his description these words: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

In a word, it is this: We are to contend, as though all depended upon our own valor; and we are to pray, as though all depended upon God's assisting grace.

Might not religion be made attractive to men, if, as in St. Paul's Epistles, a steady emphasis were thrown upon its military character?

Everywhere men are needed in our parishes. Is the effort to win them all that it should be? Is appeal made sufficiently to the heroic in man's nature? What a mistake, to try to win men with things to eat and with the bait of social

pleasure; nothing said about the army of the Living God, and the enduring of "hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Who can look out upon an army and not desire to be a soldier? It is true the world over, that military life appeals to the heroic in man's nature. This is a fact to be reckoned with; and the extent to which St. Paul seized this fact, and employed it to advantage, is a hint to every Christian evangelist. Let us have more of this in the present-day appeal of religion; and men will hearken, and will heed the summons of the Captain of their salvation.

Then, as to those already within the Church, the baptized; shall they be permitted to forget that when, in the waters of regeneration, they were signed with the sign of the Cross, it was that they might continue "Christ's faithful soldiers unto their life's end"?

Shame upon the baptized man whose

ear is not obediently attentive to the command of the Captain of his salvation. Shame upon the baptized man who lives merely the life of ease and self-indulgence. Shame upon the baptized man who puts forth no heroic effort to subdue the ruinous inclinations of his carnal nature. Shame upon the baptized man who makes no sacrifice to advance the frontier-line of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world.

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Only because St. Paul was true to this conception of life's responsibility, could he exclaim at the last: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." All these are martial figures: the soldier in battle, "I have fought a good fight"; the soldier on the march, "I have finished my course"; the soldier on guard, "I have kept the faith."

XL.

FOR THE TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

IN this Sunday's Epistle, St. Paul assures his Philippian converts of his abiding thankfulness for their "fellowship in the gospel." Fellowship in the gospel: do we find overmuch of this to-day among the followers of Christ? Is it not an urgent need in most parishes, that the baptized shall be drawn together in closer bonds of mutual affection and federated devotion?

Definite lines of inquiry press urgently upon us, as we yield our tribute of thoughtful attention to St. Paul's noble concept of "fellowship in the gospel."

Are we earnestly and anxiously one with those who are over us in the Lord?

Do we share their labors? Do we toil together with them, in the great work of the kingdom? Do we pray over that which God has given them and us to do, in His Name and for His sake? This, primarily, was the thought in St. Paul's mind, when he voiced his gratitude to God on behalf of the Philippian Christians, for their "partnership in aid of the gospel."

There is a further fellowship, concerning which it becomes us to examine our lives and question our consciences. Are we Catholic-minded; are we one in sympathy and love with God's saints everywhere, "the holy Church throughout the world"? Does the cause of Missions lie as a cherished burden upon our hearts? Do we really care for our Diocese and its Bishop, for the clergy as a body, for all people and all communities within the range and the reach of our influence and love?

St. Paul and the Philippian Chris-

tians were widely separated, and had been long time separated, when this Epistle was written. They had scarcely ever seen one another face to face; but across the years and the miles their love reached, each to the other. It was with them an intense and abiding affection, this "fellowship in the gospel," a Catholic-mindedness worthy of every Christian's resolute cultivation.

Once more, and especially, within the sacred circle of our parish do we cultivate and manifest "fellowship in the gospel"?

It is a serious thought, a most solemn fact, that they who come together in the Christian parish, which is truly a family, come together because chosen of God to be, in truest sense, "heirs together of the grace of life." Our fellow-parishioners are they with whom, one helping the other, it is the desire of our Heavenly Father that we shall

journey on through the trials of our earthly probation, and at last lay hold on eternal life. What a tie; what a bond! The newly baptized should be received with the same joy, the same interest, as that which in the family awaits the new-born child. The member overtaken in a fault should be restored by his brethren in the spirit of meekness. It should be impossible that any shall stray from the fold, and not be missed and not be sought.

"Fellowship in the gospel": the New Testament is full of this, and if it be wanting in our parishes, we may seriously wonder if our Christianity is not sadly deficient. Surely St. Paul expresses but the normal expectation of our Heavenly Father, a condition in no way to be commended as of extraordinary merit, when he says: "Ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular. The members should have the same care one for another. And

whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

XLI.

FOR THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT.

THIS Sunday rounds out for us another year of grace. The opportunities that were renewed to us a year ago have run their course, and the record of how we have used them or misused them is now incorporated into the life-record, which we must face, and for which we must give account in the day of judgment.

It is evident that the Church intends we shall make serious use of this Sunday next before Advent. The common ground of our thankfulness over the past and our expectation for the future, of our self-reproaches and our renewed resolutions, should be the appointed Gospel, which stands indeed at the heart and centre of to-day's services. Let us finish our year of grace, and examine

ourselves as to whether we have been faithful to its opportunity, in the light which flows from the miracle of Christ feeding the multitude.

We, too, have been fed, spiritually fed, by the Lord of Life. The privilege of past years has been renewed to us another year. Sundays have come and Holy Days, Advent and Lent, festival and fast. Whether we have valued it or not, the worship has gone on in our community, and Christ has come among His people at the altar of our parish church. Prayer, thanksgiving, confession, absolution, the reading of the Word: how exactly it has been for us, through the lengthening year, as it was that day when Jesus said, "Make the men sit down," and took the loaves and gave thanks, and distributed to the disciples, that they might convey His bounty to the people.

How, in response to this reiterated invitation, have we held ourselves, as part

of the multitude who have needed spiritual food and have been invited to partake, as men and women who were not ignorant of the desire of the Lord that none of His gracious feast should be lost, and none of it wasted? Is it not sorrowful business, for most of us: the examination of a past year, in the light of the privileges and the opportunities that have come to us from our merciful and loving Lord?

But Advent, for the Churchman, means the dawn of another year, a fresh start, a new beginning.

Once more Christ stands upon the mountain, among the hungry and needy multitude. We hear His gracious words, "I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way." He bids us remain with Him, seated, as it were, amid the flowers and upon the sweet springing grass of the hill-side. All that we need, that which alone can keep us alive in the sight of heaven, is

in His hand; and it is ours, potentially at least, for He blesses and bids us be fed.

There is a desire in the heart of Christ, concerning this gracious feast, and He speaks it, hoping indeed that we will heed His reasonable wish: That which I give, take freely; but let none of it be lost; let none of it be wasted.

Surely we see the bearing of this desire upon the year of opportunity now opening before us. It is a call to deeper appreciation of the Incarnation; it is our summons to the cherishing of every privilege that is ours in the Church of the Living God.

Especially should we feel the bearing of Christ's desire upon our duty and privilege of worship.

The new year which Advent ushers in, the next round of festival and fast, the daily prayer in the Father's House, the offering of the Holy Sacrifice at the altar—the spiritual feast of the coming

year—by us, as by those who love the Lord, let none of it be passed by in inappreciation; let none of it be lost; let none of it be wasted.

XLII.

FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

UPON the threshold of the Advent Season, it is well that we give ourselves with great seriousness to the devout contemplation of every inspired word that has gone on record concerning the second coming of the Lord. Especially should we consider all that Christ Himself has revealed in this matter, to guide us in the attitude of our lives toward the certainty of His return.

In a discourse mainly devoted to this theme, carefully recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, our Blessed Lord dwells upon the fact that His return will be sudden and unexpected. Men will not be looking for Him; He will come "in an hour that they are not aware of."

Wherein will consist this unreadiness

of men; what will they be doing; to what will they have so given themselves, as to have no expectant thought of Christ's return?

Our Lord makes answer to this enquiry by pointing to the antediluvians, the men upon whom the flood came. We should have expected Him to paint their characters, and to picture their unreadiness for judgment, in colors altogether different from those which He deliberately chose. It would not have surprised us, had he said: "Take warning from Noah's cotemporaries; consider how wicked they were: the murders they committed, the wrongs and injustices which stained their lives, the adulteries of which they were guilty."

This Christ does not say, true though it may have been. He surveys those lives, which should be a warning to the men of every age. He proceeds to describe the essential character of their guilt, the cause of their unreadiness for

judgment. What was it, this sin of the antediluvians, which brought upon them the swift judgment of God? We fall back aghast at the tenor of Christ's words: They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage!

What was there wrong in this? Are these forbidden things?

Can men lose their souls, through eating and drinking, through marrying and being given in marriage? 'Tis even so; and we must face the fact.

To wall God out of the life; to live solely for one's own earthly pleasure; to care only, and to care supremely, for the things of the body; to strangle the soul, and to still with violence the voice of the Holy Ghost in the heart: this is death. It swept from the earth the antediluvians, all save the family of Noah. Upon the testimony of our Lord Himself, this will be the great essential mark of men's unreadiness for His return. Made in the likeness of God, re-

deemed with the precious blood of Christ, "called to be saints" and "priests unto God," endowed with every spiritual capacity, tenanted with the Holy Ghost if they will to be: all these gifts within reach, and yet this only true of men—they eat, they drink, they marry, they are given in marriage—it is, it must be, death!

Are we mindful of the fact, that things do not need necessarily to be evil, in order to exert an evil influence? The noblest and best gifts of God may compass our downfall, if they be exalted above the giver of them, God Himself. This is one of the subtlest dangers that confront us; and we seem not to realize it. God gives us food; and, unless we are watchful, our life degenerates into a mere eating and drinking. God gives us families and homes; and, if we make an idol of them, our souls may perish through the virtue of domestic love.

Does any man question the reason-

ableness of God's expectation, that He and His kingdom shall be our supreme object of concern? Who will defend a Christian's overwhelming devotion to the theatre, alongside his almost complete neglect of the Church? Does it seem right, that God's kingdom in the world shall languish, and shall diminish the efficiency of its work, from need of a share of the money which the baptized lavish upon their earthly pleasures? Shall we better our homes, and in order that we may do so shall we lessen our gifts to God? Has gluttony ceased to be a danger, and domestic ease a possible snare for the soul?

How many Christians are thinking to-day of the second coming of Christ? How many, this Lord's Day, are doing the things which betoken a readiness, an eager desire, for Christ's return? Few probably out of many millions, if the truth were known. The conditions which exist to-day are alarmingly like

those which were in the time of Noah: the multitude, for the most part, intent on their own comforts and pleasures, "without God in the world," eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage.

It sometimes seems as though Christ's appeal for a faithful awaiting of His return, has become a personal appeal to individual men. The human race for the most part is stolid. Nations turn a deaf ear. Even the Church, as a whole, seems strangely lukewarm. Congregations are not roused, nor can be.

Christ asks *you* to be true to Him; to live your life, every day of it, every hour of it, as one in the very act of rising up to welcome his returning Lord. Wait for no one in this matter, ere you embrace the Advent faith and the Advent life. To you the Son of God appeals, with personal directness.

Make your response with that depth

of love which the Christ of the Incarnation deserves. Make your response as for your very life, heeding the urgent lesson of the Lord's own words, in the hour when He foretold the fact of His return: "Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

XLIII.

FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE purpose of the Church, in her choice of Gospel and Epistle for this Second Sunday in Advent, seems not so much to be in a general way to fortify our attachment to the Scriptures, as it is specifically to strengthen our expectation of Christ's return through appeal to the testimony of Holy Scripture, the Word of God which "shall not pass away."

St. Paul, in to-day's Epistle, declares that the things written aforetime were written for our learning, that we . . . might have hope." The hope referred to is holy confidence, not merely in the Word as genuine, but more especially in the certainty of those expectations concerning which the Word bears testimony.

The Gospel for this Sunday faces the promise of Christ's return. Therein we are bidden to believe and to expect that He will "come again with power and great glory," on the ground that this is pledged to us in His words "which shall not pass away."

So we reverently survey God's Word as a whole, from the beginning and through the long ages of the past. We find that there has been no failure, but an unerring fulfilment of promise and prediction. This should rouse within us a faith sufficient to sustain our expectation that Christ will come again, despite all appearance to the contrary. We believe because He has spoken—the Word is the ground of our confidence—and we believe the more because "God, who spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

The Lord's last words concerning the last things are therefore in a sense the

final dower of revelation; and in reality, if we read them aright, their appeal to us should be stronger even than was their appeal to the men who listened to His voice, that day upon the Mount of Olives. This is so, because of what has taken place since that memorable hour.

Pressed for a pledge, "a sign of His coming and of the end of the world," Christ graciously gave a sign or pledge, which has become to us a matter of exact historic fulfilment. He unveiled an unlikely event, near at hand, and made it the pledge of that event remote in time, His second coming to judge and to reign.

Here lies the explanation of why, that day upon the Mount of Olives, our Lord in His discourse brought together two events: the destruction of the Temple and the end of the world at His return for judgment. Both events, in that hour, seemed altogether unlikely. The one near at hand was to

be the pledge of the certainty of the other, remote in time. This pledge, which the disciples were required to receive in faith, we survey as an accomplished fact of history. To us, therefore, the sign has been fulfilled, the pledge made good.

This particularly is the Church's appeal to her children, on this Second Sunday of the Advent season: the witness of God's Word to the certainty of Christ's return. How can we falter for a moment in our devotion to the Advent faith and the Advent expectation? If we so do, we not only defeat a sustaining purpose of God on our own behalf, but we also place ourselves unmoved before the solemn declaration of the Son of Man: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

XLIV.

FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE altar Scriptures for this Third Sunday in Advent, a Sunday which ushers in an Ember week, set forth many important and practical lessons. The theme throughout is the ministry: the ministry especially in its office of preparation for the second coming of the Lord.

In the Epistle, St. Paul strenuously maintains that the obligation which rests upon him as an apostle is primarily an obligation to Christ. Together with those to whom he has brought the Gospel, he himself, even as regards his ministry, will be judged at the coming of the Lord. A steward of God's mysteries, required to be faithful, his eye therefore rests steadily upon the

Lord, who will shortly return to reckon with His servants. A similar vigilance and expectancy he seeks to impart to his lay converts, bidding them particularly to abstain from harsh judgment, in fact, all judgment, of their religious teachers, pending the coming of the Lord.

In every way these lessons of to-day's Epistle are to us of great moment: to those in Holy Orders, as inciting them to forbear time-serving and men-pleasing; to "the congregations committed to their charge," as moving them to patience, and to a lofty expectation of God-ward fidelity in those appointed to minister to them in holy things. This Epistle, so well suited to the Embertide, steadily moves us to great thoughts of the Advent, and therein are we taught, whether priest or people, to be faithful with that intense devotion which alone can enable us to rise above all *fear* of the coming of Him, "who

both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of all hearts."

The Advent message of to-day's Gospel centers in the relationship of John Baptist to our Lord at His first coming, and in the ministry of preparation so faithfully performed by the great forerunner.

St. John's work was completed. On the eve of his martyrdom, he sought to transfer his disciples to the One greater than himself; he sent them to Christ with an enquiry, the Lord's answer to which, St. John knew well, would confirm their belief that they had found the Messiah.

These men were not permitted to depart and to return, without our Lord's testimony on behalf of the Baptizer, their beloved master: that he was indeed the one of whom prophecy had spoken, "sent before to prepare the way"; that he had executed this office

with irreproachable fidelity; that he was a prophet, and "more than a prophet."

These great thoughts concerning St. John Baptist as Christ's herald at the first coming, the Church in to-day's Collect transfers to her own ministers, bidding us be mindful of the fact that they bear a similar responsibility, to "make ready the way" for the second coming of the Lord.

Here, then, are clear objective points, to which may be directed our prayers through the Advent Ember Week:

That the Church's ministers to-day may be, not time-servers and men-pleasers, but in truest sense "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God";

That they may be faithful, as was John the Baptist, neither reed-like in conviction nor allured to the luxuries of this life;

That they may honestly believe, and

move the hearts of the people to believe, that "the Lord is at hand";

That all harsh judgment in the Church may be stilled, through the resolute determination everywhere of priest and people, both alike expectant of the Advent, to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come!"

XLV.

CHRISTMAS.

NO day of the lengthening year brings to the world so deep, so pervading, so intense a joy, as the great and gracious feast of Christ's Nativity. It is a joy woven tenderly into all the better history of our lives.

The memory of some will run back this week over the Christmas Days of many years, tracing the joy and the peace in their application to many and varied phases of human life in the world. The innocent mirth of childhood, the deepening seriousness of later youth, the weighty problems of middle life with their tinge of sadness and disappointment, the faltering steps and the diminished strength of advancing years —all illumined and made glorious, like the hills around Bethlehem, with the heavenly radiance which ushered in the

momentous birth of the Son of man.

In a picture so vast as this of the Nativity, we can scarcely at one time fix our reverent thought upon more than a single circumstance.

The sign which the angel gave: do we sufficiently comprehend its far-reaching significance; does the world even now, after all these ages, receive and fully appreciate the abiding message of the sign?

This sign, let us remember, was far more than a mere means of identification. Almost anything would have served the purpose of making the shepherds sure that they had found the newborn Christ: exact information as to the road they were to travel, a description of the mother, a mere mention of the disparity in age between St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin. The sign given had a purpose and a value far beyond that of identification. It unveiled much that was involved in the Incarna-

tion. It revealed essential principles which were to prevail in the kingdom which the Son of God had come into the world to found. It is a great Christmas thought, the abiding message of the sign: "Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger"!

There were various ways in which the Son of God might have made His entrance into the world. He might suddenly have appeared among men, full grown in stature, striking in all elements of earthly greatness, what the world accounts a commanding figure: the leader of an angelic army; or a philosopher, keen and competent to confound the wisest; or a physically robust reformer, able to inspire awe, to drive men His way by sheer force, and to compel the righting of existing wrongs speedily. With such thoughts, even for a moment, in our mind, what a surprising shock it is to us, to hear

from the lips of the angel the announcement of so weak and helpless a sign as this: A Babe . . . . swaddling clothes . . . . a manger!

But who does not know that this, after all, was the glory of the Nativity?

The Son of God so came, that the world might see at once there was full measure of sacrifice in His coming. He did not require that earth should be made like heaven in order to receive Him; that what He left behind should be made up to Him, through betterment of the world's best. This was the constraint which the Incarnation was to lay upon man's faculty of appreciation: It bore to the uttermost the mark of sacrifice, a degree of sacrifice of which God alone is capable.

So we see the majesty of the Incarnation; and so we reckon the infinitude of its power. Surely He can handle life in every phase, who has first encountered it with triumph amid the com-

bined helplessness of infancy and of poverty.

This was the strength of the sign. This has immeasurably helped to convince the spiritually thoughtful that the birth in Bethlehem was a Nativity of God Incarnate. The Holy One, thus born, planted Himself, not above the world to reach down, but in the world and among men, at the *beginning* as human life is reckoned, to work up and through all of man's experience, sin alone excepted, that He might transform earthly existence in every phase and at every point.

No possible sign could so well befit the Incarnation as the sign which the angel gave: "Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

The lesson of the sign reaches still farther. In addition to its revelation concerning Christ and His kingdom it bears witness also concerning life in

general, helping us to discern the things that are of true and essential value.

Why are we so slow to learn that a life is great, not in what it has but in what it is and does? The Incarnation stood for sacrifice: the giving of no less a Self than that of the Son of God, for men, who deserved not any gracious gift at all. This in itself was too great, to be made greater by any accompaniment of earthly pomp or outward splendor. A crown, a palace, servants in attendance, plenty of the best at hand to make life comfortable: these things and the like could have added nothing to the greatness of the Christ. To such an extent do we feel they would have taken from His glory, that our hearts rebel against the thought even of our Emmanuel heralded otherwise than by a sign such as the angel gave: the Babe, the swaddling clothes, the manger.

And yet how hard it is for men to see that the things which Christ pre-

ferred not to have, can never be the great things of life for those who are willing to "follow in His train." At the return of the Christmas-tide, let us open our hearts anew to the fact that men can do Christ's work in the world, and like Him can serve their fellowmen most helpfully, even though deprived of all which their Lord was content to live without. "As poor, yet making many rich!"

The helplessness of infancy, the swaddling clothes, the manger—these apparently damaging features in the Nativity—how in reality they broaden out the field of every good Christian man's opportunity to serve and to help the world. "As poor, yet making many rich!" It sometimes seems that men in humblest circumstances catch this spirit of permitted sacrifice and service rather more than the middle class, the well-to-do. The poor help the poor, with back-and-forth ministrations and kindnesses

which involve deep personal sacrifice; while often the well-to-do, those in average circumstances, make no move at all in the direction of social service, excusing themselves on the plea that there is deficiency in their dower of opportunity.

The world still needs, will always need, the lesson of the Christmas sign.

Harm was not wrought to the Nativity, but glory rather, by Christ's brave triumph over circumstances of apparent weakness. Need any baptized man, therefore deem himself excluded from the privilege of helping, as a Christian, to advance the holy purposes of God, made manifest to the world in that lowly birth at Bethlehem?

As we kneel before the altar on the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, may our thankfulness for His great sacrifice in the Incarnation, move us to fresh resolve that we will love as He loved, and that we will serve as He served.

XLVI.

FOR THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

AS Christian Churchmen we find ourselves to-day at a point where paths converge, and lessons accumulate which should be to us of great interest and extraordinary moment. We are still within the octave of the Christmas feast. The festival of our Lord's Circumcision is at hand. The old year is dying. A new stretch of time, a fresh lease of life, is opening before us.

How may we harmonize these various facts, so blending them together that they will speak to us a constraining message, suited to the portion of life's pathway that now lies before us?

Our hearts are still aglow with the Christmas joy. Uppermost in our minds is the thought of that Divine Being, the Christ, whose tent was pitched

among the sons of men. But the Church is about to commemorate His Circumcision, that act of submission by which, careful "to fulfil all righteousness" He voluntarily become "obedient to the law for man."

It is urged that our Lord's Circumcision was not an act of free-will on His part, but was something to which He was subjected at the desire and through the judgment of other people. We may reply that no circumstance of Christ's earthly life lay outside the counsels of the undivided Trinity, and that His Circumcision was but a part, the natural beginning, of His voluntary submission to all the requirements of that dispensation, within which His earthly career was passed.

Thus regarded, the Circumcision of our Lord, in the obedient spirit which prompted it, is in all respects an example for us.

Here, then, is our wise resolve—the

resolution best suited to the new year—that, if life be spared to us, we will pass through this stretch of time upon which we are now graciously permitted to enter, true to the lesson which meets us upon its threshold, roused by our Lord's example of perfect obedience, our wills firmly set to the desire that we also may have grace to "fulfil all righteousness."

Our Blessed Lord claimed for Himself no exemption from the ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation, under which it was His will to be born; He received them all. He was circumcised; He kept the law; He honored the Temple; He respected the priesthood; He observed the appointed feasts and fasts. In all these and kindred matters He was scrupulously faithful.

With Christ's perfect example before us, let us enter upon the new year with fresh determination, so far as in us lies, to "walk in all the command-

ments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

Especially let us catch the spirit manifested in Christ's Circumcision: how He went beyond what might reasonably be required of Him, "and was obedient to the law for man" even in those respects wherein the law had no possible bearing upon Him as sinless. Was not this for our sake, that we through His example might feel the constraint of a similarly joyful and consistent obedience?

If it became Christ, the sinless One, to fulfil all the demands of righteousness, far more must it become us, in whom there has been so much amiss from the day we were born, now and henceforth with fresh endeavor to "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

XLVII.

EPIPHANY.

THE Church expects us during the Epiphany season, upon which we have now entered, that we will give ourselves to sustained consideration of how the Christ, whose birth we have just commemorated, made no disguise of His divinity, but revealed Himself as the Son of God with clearness and in fulness to the world.

Quite at the start stands the flight into Egypt. Of what was this an epiphany: of strength or of weakness, of victory or of defeat?

It may seem to us that here was no epiphany of a divine power and a divine purpose, but just the contrary. Why should the Christ be taken beyond the reach of the blood-thirsty Herod? Why should there not be immediate

combat between the forces of God's Kingdom and the powers of this evil world? Why should Herod be allowed to live, and the holy innocents be slain? Why, as though repulsed and defeated, should the King of men retire even for an hour to the seclusion of Egypt?

All that took place, we may be sure was planned in the counsels of the undivided Trinity. In the flight into Egypt, the heavenly mind does discern an epiphany of divinity; for, although human and earthly plans brook no delay, it remains forever a fact that God can be patient, that God can wait, that God can forbear to retaliate. It was no defeat—it was rather an evidence of power and of strength—that Christ retired to the seclusion of Egypt, and that Herod, though he slew the innocents, was permitted to live out his guilty span unmolested.

To wait is the prerogative of God, for all time is God's. To be patient

and to forbear, are evidences far more of divinity than of humanity. In a word—let us take this fact into our hearts—of all the epiphanies of Christ's divinity, none is more beautiful than the apparently helpless flight into Egypt. How God-like it all was: the patience, the willingness to wait, the marvellous forbearance, the entire submission of the Son to the will of the Father, "Be Thou there until I bring Thee word."

The lesson is especially one that has to do with the Church. There are circumstances, and there are communities, in which at times the most and the best that the Church can do is to wait, to remain quietly faithful to her Lord, and to tarry in apparent failure, yet with confidence, for the renewal of her opportunity.

Waves of worldliness and earthly pride, waves of indifference or pronounced hostility to religion, waves of

heresy and schism, overspread communities and make it for the time impossible that the Church shall pursue an unbroken course of what men account successful achievement. Then it is that we need to lay to heart the lesson of Christ's sojourn in Egypt.

Since the Holy Catholic Church is the Body of Christ, dowered and sustained with the promises of God, she can wait, since all time is hers. As she is Catholic, so, even in the midst of opposition, can she be patient, and manifest toward men the forbearance of her divine Head and Master. She need not rush into the arena for a hand-to-hand fight with infidels, heretics, and unbelievers. Let her rather cast her care upon God, do her duty to men so far as permitted with genuine love, go into temporary retirement if need be as did Christ, and wait for the Father's word.

To wait is often the condition which God has attached to ultimate and com-

plete victory. Only Christ's people must see to it that they wait with no loss either of effort or faith, with no resort to worldly and unspiritual expedients, but with their confidence immovably fixed upon God.

"Flee into Egypt , and be thou there until I bring thee word."

XLVIII.

FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

A CHIEF characteristic of the Christ-life was the calm dignity of its repose. Strong and resourceful in action, our Lord never yielded Himself to the weakness of excitement, or to the flutter of ill-thought-out haste. He bided His time, and at Cana, when others sought permaturely to drive Him to the front, He resisted their suggestion with the calm reply, "Mine hour is not yet come."

There are great lessons for us in these words of our Blessed Lord; and the especial point to be remembered is that all along, while He sought neither to hasten nor to defer the divine purpose, Christ was making gloriously ready for the crisis which would confront Him

when He must say, "Mine hour *is* come." With us, however, it is often widely different. "The hour is not yet come": We speak the words so languidly and unthoughtfully as virtually to mean, "The coming to us of life's opportunity is so unlikely, that we do not need to waste our time in fruitless preparation."

Often for a long time the affairs of a man's life are so beyond his control, that as regards worship and toil for the Church he honestly feels that his hour of great usefulness has not yet come. He waits; but does he make ready? Does he wait with that yearning anxiety which will make him quick to discern and to seize the larger opportunity for religion when it comes to him?

Possibly the man does not. His affairs change for the better: he has leisure, with release from perpetual toil; financial anxiety vanishes, and affluence comes to take its place; health

is reëstablished; he finds himself, after long waiting, now at last in close proximity to a church;—but no change in the man, as regards his relationship to the Kingdom of Heaven! A better father, a more useful citizen, no doubt; but not a whit better and more useful Christian! "The hour is not yet come": he has said this so often, that he has continued to say it, even after it can be said by him only with absolute dishonesty. It has become his established excuse, which cannot be dislodged from his heart, even by this message from the invisible throne, "Son, your hour, so long deferred, has come at last in glorious fulness."

Thus men, unmindful of Christ's example, fail to prepare themselves for large opportunities of service, which await them in the Church. And thus, alas! men fail to prepare themselves for the inevitable sorrows of human life in the world.

It is astonishing, the immunity which some people seem to feel that they have against affliction. They simply will not believe that bereavement can ever come to them. The thought is so foreign to their expectation, that when sickness and death enter the household, they are overwhelmed; even their religion has no power to strengthen them.

If in this matter you can say to-day, "Mine hour is not yet come," realize nevertheless that it may be near. Do this, not gloomily, but with the prudence of Christian forethought. Do this, to keep right your relationship to those about you; for harshness and unkindness are impossible with him who realizes "the shortness and uncertainty of human life!"

The value of expectant preparation: Christ taught this lesson at Cana. "The hour is not yet come"; but it *will* come. Therefore let each day of waiting be a day of preparation. Then can there be

no surprise. The strength needed will have been gathered, and will be in readiness "against that hour."

XLIX.

THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL.

MANY and great thoughts press upon us, as we give ourselves to the contemplation of that which the Church this week commemorates: the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, a fierce and determined foe, to become the friend and one of the chiefest apostles of the Christ. Especially may we remember that this man was brought into the kingdom, not solely for his own personal safety and salvation, but also and particularly that through him the kingdom might be served, strengthened, and enlarged. "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

For a catholic and world-wide apostleship, Saul of Tarsus was conspicuously marked and equipped: more

so probably, than any man then living. In him were combined three civilizations: the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Roman.

This zealous man was a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, schooled and trained in Jerusalem, "at the feet of Gamaliel"; a Jew moreover of the strictest type, a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrim. Though a Jew, he had been born and reared in a Gentile city, Tarsus of Cilicia, where he had acquired knowledge of the Greek language, together with that culture and learning which would equip him to encounter philosophers and to write great argumentative epistles. Furthermore he was a Roman citizen. The catholicity of this man's equipment to be a chief and conspicuous apostle, coincided exactly with the catholicity indicated in the languages of the superscription above the Cross: "In letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew!"

We must not study this "wonderful conversion," without giving our attention to the fact that Christ came and seized this man, not merely in order to save him, but also and most certainly in order to use him. This St. Paul himself recognized and acknowledged: "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

How hard it is to induce Christians to see, that as it was in St. Paul's conversion, so would God have it be in every man's discipleship: a response to "the heavenly vision," which reaches beyond a mere willingness to be saved, and issues in a determination to be useful in the kingdom and to the King.

This for us personally is the practical

lesson of this week's commemoration: Not that we may expect to be dealt with in startling fashion as was Saul of Tarsus, but that in the same kingdom into which he was brought, we are placed, for a purpose which can never exhaust itself in a mere satisfaction over our own individual security.

To every baptized man the message of the Christ is the very same that He spake on the Damascus road: "Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; . . . the people, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

The men of to-day are no less called of God in their Baptism, than was St. Paul in his "wonderful conversion."

Happy the baptized man whose daily determination is this: God being my helper, I am resolved to be "not disobedient to the heavenly vision!"

L.

THE PURIFICATION.

THE week now opening before us brings the day, the fortieth from the Nativity, upon which the Church commemorates the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, together with the Purification of His Virgin Mother.

Our thought lingers with fondness upon the scene, each figure in which is most attractive.

"The submission of the Blessed Virgin to the ceremony of purification, and of her Divine Son to that of presentation in the Temple, were each of them an illustration of the perfect humiliation of our Lord to the likeness of sinful man. The miraculous conception of the Blessed Virgin had been unattended by that for which a ceremonial purifica-

tion was ordained; and our Blessed Lord, having no original sin, needed not to be offered (or presented) and bought back again. But as at His Baptism, so now, for Himself and for His Holy Mother, He says by their acts, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' "

Added to this, was the fact that the Virgin Mother brought the offering of poverty. He who at His birth had been wrapped in swaddling clothes, was presented in the Temple as the Child of one who could not afford to bring the offering of the well-to-do. How honorable poverty seems, how it ceases to be (as some regard it) a barrier against religious devotion, when we reflect upon the fact that she who to the Father's House brought in her arms the very Son of God, gave into the treasury the permitted alternative, all that she could bring: "A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons."

We are to love this scene, and to dwell upon it with a sincere interest, primarily for the sake of Him whose every move and every word and every act deserve our reverent attention and admiration. In addition to this, the scene that day in the Temple speaks to us two notes of warning.

The submission of our Lord and of His Virgin Mother to these requirements of the Mosaic Law, sternly reproves the pride and self-trust of many to-day, who, although not positively hostile to religion, do nevertheless regard the sacraments and ordinances of the Christian Church as for them unnecessary.

There is a growing tendency, even among those in some measure attached to the Church, to neglect the baptism of their children, to feel in themselves no constraint in the direction of Confirmation and Holy Communion—in short, to withhold sacramental obedience alto-

gether—on the ground that such submission is unnecessary in this age of widespread enlightenment.

Is there no message for such men in the lessons of this feast of the Purification? What that was done that day in the Temple, needed to be done? None of it; and yet our Blessed Lord and His Virgin Mother claimed no exemption from the ordinary requirement of the ancient law. If it became them as a matter of example, much more it becomes us as a matter of obedience, "to fulfil all righteousness."

Then there is another thought. Shall any one release himself from joyful participation in the religious life of the Church, through the false pride of poverty? How much this is done, sometimes as an insincere excuse, sometimes in bitter rebellion against the providence of God.

We will at least remember, that over the religious serenity of the Virgin

Mother came no overshadowing cloud, as she gave into the treasury the scanty offering of an honorable poverty.

LI.

FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

DOES it not often seem to us that there is little genuine peace in the world? How seldom, in these troubled days, do we behold a countenance, the strength, the repose, the tranquility of which are the outward token of an abiding peace in the heart.

And yet, in to-day's Epistle, we face the words, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts"; our inference from which must be that such will be the case, unless the operation of the Spirit be hindered in our lives. Two possible hindrances seem to suggest themselves to the apostle's mind: a forgetting toward men, in our failure to appreciate the bond of the "one body"; and a forgetting toward God, in our failure to

carry out this feature of the divine will, "Be ye thankful."

Thus, then, the appeal shapes itself, in the awakening terms of a stately sequence: Peace . . . . one body . . . . thankful! "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful."

To forget the "one body," is a serious obstacle to the reign of peace in the heart of the Christian believer.

Irritating influences crowd upon us through our contact with other people. Who has not said in his heart: I long for peace but cannot find it; there are those about me who seem determined that I shall not taste this heavenly gift? Even St. Paul exclaimed, "Brethren, pray for us, that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men"; and yet this same apostle wrote, "Let the peace of God rule in your heart, to the which ye are called in one body."

"In one body!"—here is the fact to help us dwell at peace, even in an unfavorable environment. Many, perhaps all, of those with whom we are tempted to contend are with us in what St. Paul calls the "one body." Shall we mar the unity of the "one body," even under provocation, and lose the peace of God which ought to rule in our hearts? Within the family, in the Church, shall we not endure to the uttermost, rather than break the unity of the "one body"?

Again, our peace is ofttimes disturbed by anxiety attendant upon what we call "the hard things of life": misfortune, poverty, suffering, bereavement. Under these circumstances, it seems to us perhaps that God has failed us, and our peace breaks down through distrust of His providence.

Then the remedy lies in the closing words of St. Paul's noble precept, "Be ye thankful."

We are not so submerged in mis-

fortune as to have lost the obligation and the power to be thankful. This is a trite theme; but none the less it remains a fact forever, that the heart habitually attuned to thankfulness, is the heart in which peace may reign, whatever comes. Nothing so firmly establishes the dominion of peace in the Christian's soul as that resolute and determined spirit of gratitude, upon which the temptation to distrust God beats but in vain.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Of these words of the Master, St. Paul's appeal is a fitting interpretation: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful."

LII.

THE PRE-LENTEN DAYS.

IT is not too much to say, that for all of us the character of the Lent that awaits us, will depend to a very great extent upon our attitude toward the days of preparation, upon which we are now entering. It is a matter of ordinary observation and experience, that God's grace is efficient according to the measure with which it finds for itself "a people prepared for the Lord."

Men's use of Sunday affords a sufficient illustration of this fact and principle. The Lord's day for many is robbed of uplifting influence through their inability, or their wilful failure, to make ready for its spiritual enrichment. When the late hours of Saturday night are crowded with business or social activity, and the Christian

sinks to rest at midnight, or later, in a state of complete physical exhaustion, the likelihood of a satisfactory and helpful Sunday is killed for him in advance and utterly. How may we hope to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," if the hours which lie immediately before are permitted to deplete and exhaust our powers of mind and body? Lack of suitable preparation, with some people unavoidable and with others inexcusable, ruins the Sunday to a great extent, and in almost all communities.

The occupations of Lent lie so far apart from what men ordinarily require of themselves, that to rush upon them precipitately and at a moment's notice, means shock and probable recoil. Even our Lord drew near thoughtfully and with preparation to His passion. Upon the hill of Transfiguration He began to make ready both Himself and His apostles for the hill of Calvary, and "steadfastly set His face to go to

Jerusalem." His example is difficult to follow, especially in the sobriety of its utter calmness and interior thoughtfulness. The rush of the world's tempestuous life so possesses us, that we easily abandon all effort to follow the admonition of the Church when she brings to us this message from the Lord: "Be still then, and know that I am God."

And yet, to do faithfully as the Church requires—to draw near intelligently and thoughtfully to the occupations of Lent—was never more worth men's while than it is to-day. The utter unrest and confusion of present-day life throw deep emphasis upon our need of such help as awaits us in the careful observance of the pre-Lenten days. Let us steadfastly set our face now to go to Calvary.

A further thought in this connection may be of help to us. The termination of Lent, with its Gethsemane and Cal-

vary, suggests that termination of the earthly life which awaits all of us. God may give us, as the end draws near, a period of penitence and preparation, a Lent of final illness, in which to gird our loins for the journey. But even this, with the heavy burden of pain and weakness upon us, can hardly avail to make us ready, except our previous life, all along, has had in it somewhat of thoughtful anticipation and sustained preparation for the testing days of final earthly experience.

The spirit of the pre-Lenten season becomes us therefore at all times. In the days of ordinary activity, in the days of health and prosperity, we must prepare to follow Christ into "the valley of the shadow"; we must begin to make ready for "the hour of death and the day of judgment."

LIII.

THE DESIRE TO PAY.

IT is an inquiry which may well engage our attention in the pre-Lenten season: How may we best seek to secure God's pardon for our sin? Shall we approach God with light-heartedness, as most people do if at all, convincing ourselves that if we ever did any wrong, it is a matter of no great consequence; or shall we approach Him with broken-heartedness, acknowledging the magnitude of our debt through sin, and honestly desiring to render some suitable satisfaction for the wrong we have done?

This subject is beset with great practical difficulty at the present time.

Many hearts have lost the power to realize what sin is: some through pride and conceit; others through long trans-

gression, which seems to them of no great consequence, since up to the present hour it has brought upon them no visible vengeance of God. What God allows to go on, they infer that He takes no account of.

People of the Church sometimes deal with themselves lightly in this matter, concluding that, since God loves to forgive, "the more the better": an inference which St. Paul thus indignantly reproved, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid."

True as it is that Christ died to make forgiveness possible; it is not true that Christ died in order that forgiveness might be thrust upon an unappreciative and unrepentant world.

All sin is debt. A man owes you a hundred dollars. How will you deal with him? Mercifully, of course, for your religion requires this. You will give him opportunity to pay, for his own sake. Suppose it becomes known

to you, that the concentrated misfortunes of his life are so great that in all probability he will never be able to pay; how, then, will you deal with him? Again, for his own sake, you will expect him to be fair with you: not grovel in the dust, but in a manly way acknowledge the situation with a regret not feigned.

If it comes to your ears that this man is boasting how he got a hundred dollars out of you, and expects to get more—that he has found you an easy prey—you will surely see that you have a responsibility, further to deal with this debtor in such way that his moral nature shall not be utterly corrupted through your weak leniency.

Through sin we are hopelessly in debt to God. Three courses are open to us: we can utterly ignore the whole situation; or we can "continue in sin that grace may abound," or we can determine to hold ourselves in such serious

relationship to God, that He can never say that we sin without sorrow, or that we expect forgiveness without genuine and suitable penitence.

The servant in the parable agonizingly desired to pay; and it was this hopeless desire to pay which commended him to the mercy of his master, and moved the master to say: "Thou hast nought to pay; I frankly forgive thee all."

Two conclusions follow. Let us seek for ourselves some suitable system of penitence. Let us not expect God to do what man perfectly well knows that even He has no moral right to do: put a premium upon wrong-doing, by rewarding it with leniency for which the wrong-doer does not even take the trouble to ask.

LIV.

LENT.

THE Lent season, upon which we are about to enter, throws steady emphasis upon the ascetic side of Christianity, now as always unwelcome to the world: fasting, abstinence, the stern denial of self, the sacrifice of the body for the good of the soul. To the worldly-minded this whole conception is a matter of amazement, but not so to the Christian mindful of his Master's words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

For the Churchman to keep Lent suitably and earnestly, is a matter of very great difficulty at the present time.

There is an easy temptation to childishness in religion: to play at keeping Lent, as children play at keeping house.

Bishop Alexander thus describes this: "They feign a serious look which lacks the spirit of reality. They doff a becoming blue and don a becoming black. They give up what they care not for, but forswear discipline if it cuts across their trend of inclination. Like birds of passage, they dip their wings in the lake of penitence and fly on their way unchanged."

Let us start right this year. In a few short hours the Church will begin again her march toward Calvary. We hear the voice of Christ: Bear Me company; share with Me the pain, the sacrifice, the travail of soul. Shall we respond in a spirit of childishness? Shall we not rather press forward in the journey, with these words of petition in our hearts and on our lips: "By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial; by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the

coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us"?

While Lent is not primarily a season of missionary effort, in one respect it ought to be such in every parish. Lent is a time of revival, of renewal. We enter upon it, not only as individuals needing help, but quite as much as members of congregations. We must therefore be solicitous, not for ourselves alone, but also even for all the baptized —especially for the lapsed, who, after having tasted of the heavenly gift, have dropped from their vocation and gone back to the ways of the world. There are many such, alas! in most parishes; perhaps there is one whom we might bring again; and perhaps to us God is saying: "Thou shalt not see My face, except thy brother be with thee."

To build one's self up anew in the love of God, and in the doing of it to reach out and help to build someone else up anew in the love of God: this

is a true Lent, this the renewal most acceptable to God.

Let us approach Lent in the spirit of King David's noble resolution: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." The burnt offering of ancient times stood for the total dedication to God of him who offered it. Let us seek, this Lent, the spirit of the burnt offering: total dedication, nothing kept back. This, of course, will mean a costly Lent; but the more our Lent costs us, in the way of sacrifice and self-denial, the more we may hope it will please God, and carry us forward in the way that leadeth to eternal life.

LV.

ARMED RECREANTS.

IN a striking sermon, entitled "Armed Recreants," Alexander McLaren pictures most graphically the guilt of "the children of Ephraim, who, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle."

The thought is one that may have strong appeal for us, in connection with the holy season of Lent. Once more the great battle is on. The forces of the kingdom are rallied beneath the banner of the Cross. Not to respond, or to flee from the conflict: what is this for the Churchman but to incur the guilt of an armed recreancy, the shame of carrying bows and yet of turning back in the day of battle?

When an unarmed warrior is beaten

down and slain by a powerful foe—when the soldier has done his best and yet is conquered in the fight—there is disaster but no guilty cowardice. We may even admire the courage which has moved him to die rather than to flee. But not to use one's weapons of warfare, to shun the battle, to flee without putting forth any resistance, to carry bows and yet turn back: this shows a craven spirit, unworthy of the man enlisted in the service of one "who hath called him to be a soldier."

And yet is not this exactly what many of the baptized, many Churchmen, do to their shame? So far as they are concerned, the Lenten call of the Church falls upon ears that are purposely and stubbornly deaf. No sturdy discipline; no deepened purpose of prayer; no renewed struggle against temptation; no putting on of long neglected armor; no resolute and determined participation in the conflict of

God's kingdom with the powers of evil. To them, alas! the days of Lent are no different from other days. They turn back; or, more likely, they hold aloof altogether from the combat to which they are summoned by the Captain of their salvation.

The deep sorrow of it all is the fact that these non-combatants are *armed* recreants. They carry, or they once carried, weapons that are entirely sufficient, if faithfully employed, to insure them a glorious victory in life's battle.

What weapon of defence, what weapon of aggressive spiritual warfare, need the man lack who has been baptized, confirmed, received into the company of the faithful, and admitted to the privilege of communion in the Church of the Living God? "All things are his." To him there is need of no further grace than that already bestowed—grace which can never be exhausted, if appreciated and drawn

upon;—but he who has received it must use it, lest it be withdrawn.

For the Churchman, therefore, to be indifferent to the Lenten call of his Master, to hear and not to heed, to behold the conflict afar and repress utterly the desire to enter it and to share the warfare of the saints: what can this be but to incur a guilt like that of "the children of Ephraim, who, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle?

From such tragic unfaithfulness, "Good Lord, deliver us!"

LVI.

PRAYER AND TOIL.

WE may well ask ourselves, as the days of Lent advance: Do we heed the Church's call to prayer; and, if so, what use do we make of the grace which our prayers have won?

Are we mindful of our Blessed Lord's example in these matters? Does it arrest our attention, and lead us in the way of the Father's will, to contemplate how He, the Christ, "went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer, and came down and stood in the plain, and a great company of people came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases"?

What a picture; what a constraining example for us, at the Lenten-tide! "All night in prayer!" Around the

Christ lay the sleeping world; the twinkling stars overhead shed their faint beams of light upon His kneeling form; the hours of the night-watch crept slowly by; and yet He continued in prayer till the morning broke. The day that followed was to the Christ a day of tremendous moment: apostles to choose, multitudes to teach, the sick to heal! Toil succeeded prayer: from the mountain He descended into the plain, to convert the grace which His prayer had won into achievement for the kingdom He had come to found.

The whole scene staggers us: the prayer and the toil alike. Yet it is in every way for our example, especially in these Lenten days.

We too, as Christ's people, must go up into the mountain to pray; and we must descend again into the plain to serve.

Two possible dangers assail us in this weighty matter. We may encounter the

toil, without the prayer; or we may pray, and shirk the toil.

The true Lent brings to the true Christian a deepened desire to serve: an honest determination to toil and to make sacrifice for the heavenly kingdom, to seek and to help wayward brethren, to do something that may tend to establish more firmly among the sons of men the Church of the Living God.

Surely such service will need the grace which prayer alone can win: first the mountain, then the plain; first the prayer, then the work! But we are tempted to forget our Lord's example. What we may do seems so insignificant and unimportant as compared with what He once did, that we are moved to say: What is the use of praying over it? We rush into the plain, only to fail, because we have not known the stillness of the mountain and the touch of the Father's hand.

There is an opposite danger which

confronts some, though perhaps not many: to seek God's grace and never use it, to keep a selfish Lent, to pray and not toil, to remain steadily upon the mountain in utter forgetfulness of the need and the opportunity which summon to the plain below.

To keep the right Lent, requires above all that we follow in the Master's footsteps. With Him, therefore, let us go up into the mountain for strength. Then let us descend with Him into the plain, and use the power which God has given us.

Ought there not to be immense activity among Christians during Lent? Shall not prayer issue in good works, in deeds of mercy, in almsgiving, in practical compassion for the lapsed, in the devotion of all the power which we can win upon the mountain to God's service in the plain of life's opportunity?

LVII.

GODLY SORROW AND WORLDLY SORROW.

IN our Lenten thought concerning sin and repentance, we may be helped by keeping in mind St. Paul's distinction between "godly sorrow" and "the sorrow of the world."

To be sorry for the wrong that one has done is natural and all but universal; and yet sorrow alone is not repentance, nor can we say that all sorrow for sin is of the kind that proves availing. There is sorrow "with a view to God," and there is sorrow "with a view to the world"; the former of which, according to St. Paul, "worketh repentance," while the latter "worketh death." Our grief over transgression, therefore, restores life or fails to restore it, according to whether it be sorrow in respect to God or sorrow in respect to the world.

This is a matter in which we may easily go wrong, and satisfy ourselves with a sorrow for sin which has no power to restore life.

Let us take for illustration the sin of untruthfulness, from which as a seat of moral disease in the heart, spring the various kinds of dishonesty which ruin souls and corrupt society.

A "sorrow of the world" over untruthfulness is a man's selfish regret that after awhile, in consequence of his deception, he may be overtaken with loss of reputation, loss of station, loss of influence. This in itself is a low view to take of transgression; the utter inadequacy of which will betray itself in various ways and at every turn. Such sorrow does not root itself in a keen realization that wrong has been done, but rather, springs tardily from the disclosure of the wrong. If through adroitness visible harm has been averted, more than likely it will seem to this

sinner that no wrong has been done at all.

How can there be life from such misdirected and imperfect sorrow? It "worketh death," not only in the defect of its moral motive, but also in the fact that, being in respect to the world rather than in respect to God, it meets no message of a Deliverer, but can only beat itself in vain against the world's stubborn unwillingness to forgive.

In mighty contrast with this defective and inadequate "sorrow of the world," stands "godly sorrow"—grief in respect to God—of which St. Paul declares that it "worketh repentance to salvation, which none will ever regret."

Think again of the sin of untruthfulness. Godly sorrow for this springs primarily from a man's keen appreciation of the fact, that to be false is above all an offense against the God of Truth. Our relationship to God is harmed the moment this sin is committed. In one

who realizes this bodeful fact, grief is immediate. The movement, therefore, toward repentance begins at once, and there is little likelihood of long deflection from the path of honor. The godly penitent meets God the Deliverer; his sorrow issues in the washing away of guilt through Christ. Contrition (counter-action) follows; and if through the wrong done harm has been wrought to men, there will be reparation and restitution, of course; for the revival of the sinner's right relationship to God will be felt to demand the setting straight of his relationship to man.

Through Lent, and at all times, let this therefore be the cry of our wounded hearts: "O God, against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."

LVIII.

THE ANNUNCIATION

IN the midst of our Lent season we pause to-day and take up a more joyful strain, in celebrating the festival known in the Calendar as "The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary." In a very real sense this is the Feast of the Incarnation, and our observance of it should voice our full appreciation of what it was that the Son of God became one of us, "was made man," and, when He took upon Him to deliver man, did humble Himself to be born of a Virgin.

This Feast of the Annunciation takes to itself an added importance, just at the present time, in view of the fact that there seems to be, somewhat even in unexpected places, a wavering, a distrust, a doubt, as to the scriptural

doctrine of the Incarnation, and the Virgin Birth of our Lord.

The fact that this festival falls this year* upon a Sunday will give a favorable opportunity to the reverend clergy to gain the hearing of their people, in a resolute defence of the Church's faith touching the Incarnation. The points involved need not be, should not be, presented as uncertain and debatable; but at least it may be said that the minds of our lay people, at this Feast of the Annunciation, should be relieved of all doubt as to their clergy's loyal acceptance of the Incarnation, and the Virgin Birth of our Lord. The occasion is opportune for all of us, layman as well as priest, even the humblest child of the Church, before the altar to bring to our Incarnate Lord the tribute of a faith that knows no wavering:

"God of God, Light of Light, Very

* 1906.

God of Very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man"!

Our thought, too, will rest now most lovingly and with deepest veneration uqon the Virgin Mother. We will study with care all that is told us in Holy Scripture concerning her. We will realize anew that the true woman must not lack those graces and excellencies of character—faith, trust, and submission to the divine will—which commended Mary ofNazareth to be chosen of God as the instrument of the Incarnation on its human side. Christian mothers especially will remember to-day, as is so well said by Jeremy Taylor, "that the Virgin Mary attained excellence by means of a quiet and silent piety, by internal actions of love,

devotion and contemplation; and that she thereby teaches us that those graces which walk in a veil and shadow make great ascents to God, and are as sure progress to favor and a crown as the exercise of a more public piety."

"Little children were brought to Jesus that He might lay His hands upon them, and thus sanctify them by the touch of a passing moment; but the same Jesus abode long in His mother's bosom, His spotless Body was formed of her substance, and sanctified her both in what He received from her as Man, and in what He gave to her as God" (J. H. Blunt).

"Hail, thou that art highly favored. The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!"

LIX.

STONED IN THE TEMPLE.

THE Gospel for Passion Sunday ends with the tragic words: "Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple." His Father's house; Himself cast out!

The attitude of the Temple toward our Lord is a surprise that impresses itself upon us more and more forcibly, as we read with care the Gospels.

It was His Father's house. History, patriotism, religion, and hope pointed to the Temple as the centre of Israel's unity. The Temple naturally should have been the scene of our Lord's ministry and life: the throne, we may say, of His Messiahship. It bade fair to be so at the start. On the two occasions when as a child Christ came to His

Father's house, some degree of recognition and of honor was accorded Him; but from the hour when His ministry began, it seemed as though the Temple, through its accredited rulers and representatives, stood determinedly against Him. This was in large degree occasioned, no doubt, by the authority which Christ exercised in the Temple, in driving profaners from the sacred courts. That resolute and righteous act was not forgotten. It led to fiercer and fiercer opposition upon the part of the Temple officers, until the long-standing hatred culminated in the event which the Church presents in her Passion Sunday Gospel; when "they took up stones to cast at Him, and Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple."

Christ would not contend further with those men. He would leave them, and the Temple, too. In the streets and on the hillside He could still gather people about Him to hear His word; but

not in the Temple, for from those hallowed courts He had been literally driven out.

Is it possible for us, in our churches, to sustain such careless and unappreciative relationship to Christ, that He will leave us, and will depart from our temple?

As a matter of fact, uo church is so hallowed in itself, and so permanently secure in its possession of God's favor, that Christ will consider it a privilege to be stoned therein. There is a sense in which Christ comes or goes, stays or departs, according as it is determined for Him by the devotion or the indifference of the congregation. He will not confine Himself within the walls of our house of prayer, if suitable devotion be withheld; He will not abide there when the congregation refuse to abide there. He was not so chained, even to the great Temple at Jerusalem; He left it, rather than submit to be stoned therein.

May it not be that we Churchmen need especially to lay this lesson to heart? We make our churches beautiful and costly. We dedicate them with a very solemn service of consecration. We guard the altar and the sanctuary. We exclude irreverence. We are willing our children shall be taught that Christ is in the Holy Place, and that we must be careful in His house and before His altar-throne.

Then, perhaps, we habitually stay at home on the Lord's day, and never or rarely draw near with devotion to the temple, in which we expect Christ to abide forever. Does it occur to us that Christ is as much stoned in His temple by the baptized man who stays away, as by the baptized man who comes without suitable reverence?

Let us carry this thought with us, especially through the solemn days that are ushered in by Passion Sunday: our Lord remains where He is loved

and served; He departs from those who take up against Him the stones either of a determined opposition or of a faithless indifference.

LX.

HOLY WEEK.

WE enter now upon the most sacred week of all the year, the week that commemorates the sacrifice and the passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Once more it is permitted us to be the near friends and companions of the Son of Man, through the deep humiliation which preceded Easter.

A week of tremendous memories! "In the simple and vivid words of the Evangelists, the Church will rehearse, day by day, the incidents of those awful hours in which the Incarnate Son of God confronted the powers of sin, of darkness, and of death, and subdued them. But at what a cost! The agony, the stripes, the outstretched arms, the nailed hands and feet, the bitter cry—these were but the outward tokens of

that struggle and woe. The terrors of the inward conflict no man can realize. Christ knew the height above and the depth below, the surpassing worth of righteousness and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. None could share with Him this knowledge. 'He trod the winepress alone.' Hence the hush of Holy Week. Not this the time for worldly absorption and jollity. Not this the time for oppression and hatred. Nothing mean and petty in thought, word or deed, fits in with the solemnity of these commemorative days."

It may help us in our Holy Week to feel and to realize that each hour Christ speaks to us the words of invitation and of privilege: "Tarry ye here and watch with Me."

In the garden of Gethsemane our Lord willed not to be alone. From the apostolic band He chose three, who were to be near Him in His hour of deepest agony, for His sake, and for theirs.

We are quite sure that He craved human sympathy. We are doubly sure that their nearness to Him in that hour, was in order that these apostles, in their later witness to the Passion, might say authoritatively: "We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen."

"Tarry ye here and watch with Me." Who, with love for Christ in his heart, does not say with eagerness: Would God, such privilege were mine!

It *is* ours, if we will to take it. God offers it now. We may make it our own, if we will but regard the obligations and seize the privileges of the Holy Week.

No delusive fancy of the imagination, a substantial reality rather, is the devoted Christian's tarrying and watching with his Lord, along the way that leads to Calvary. May it not be now as it was then—the same double purpose—"for His sake, and for ours"?

The best devotion in Holy Week

centers itself in Christ, for no selfish purpose of its own, but out of a pure and unsullied love for Him. Dear Lord, not altogether because of the fact that Thou hast redeemed us, but for Thine own sake and with our heart's purest tribute of unselfish love, we will now tarry, we will now watch, with Thee.

The "for our sake" enrichment of Holy Week—even this need not be, and will not be, altogether a personal and individual advantage of our own. Made again to see and to feel the greatness "of the sacrifice of the death of Christ," we will be equipped anew to bear our witness to the love of God for man.

Ye have been with Me; be now My witness. Can anything short of this be the ultimate purpose and desire of Him who now calls us to Himself: "Tarry ye here and watch with Me"?

LXI.

EASTER.

NOW is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." Greatest indeed of the facts of history is that which Easter commemorates: greatest in its measure of victory for the Son of Man; greatest in its measure of hope for the sons of men.

"In every life," says Canon Knox Little, "there must be something to fall back upon. Life for any who think is far too wide, too strange, too serious, to find itself satisfied without definite support. We reach a point at last—whatever our theory of life may be—where we need a strong foundation on which to base it all, a solid rock on which we may stand. For those who seriously accept the Christian religion as the solution of

life's problems, that rock, that foundation, is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. No man who makes the Christian view of life his own, can long dispense with the solemn and powerful fact upon which it must ultimately rest: 'He suffered and was buried: And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures.' "

We may well remind ourselves at Easter that belief in the resurrection does not, after all, tax faith overmuch. Life beyond the grave is not essentially improbable, hard to conceive, difficult to believe. Faith in the resurrection by no means implies a determined credulity, the going against what it is natural for man to accept and believe.

The night in which He was betrayed, on the eve of His crucifixion, our Lord gathered His apostles about Him in the upper room to eat the Passover, to institute the Holy Eucharist, and to tell them in tender discourse of "the last

things." At a certain point in the conversation, Christ touched for a moment upon the life beyond: His own resurrection, and that which would result from it for the sons of men. He did not tell much—three brief and fragmentary sentences—"Many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again." In the very midst of this gracious revelation, words were interjected which challenge our profound attention, *"If it were not so, I would have told you."*

What thrilling testimony to the antecedent probability of the resurrection! What a thought—what a fact—the resurrection so natural and reasonable an expectation, that we would be justified in expecting it, with no further proof than that of the Lord's silence as to the contrary! "I have not told you that it is not so; therefore you ought to believe that it is so." What may we infer but this? According to testimony of the

Son of God, so antecedently probable is the resurrection, that the man to bring proof in this matter should be the unbeliever; the resurrection, with no direct evidence to support it, might reasonably stand a fact, until someone has brought proof that it is not a fact.

And yet, in spite of these words of our Blessed Lord, it becomes us to remember that our faith in the resurrection grounds itself, not in that silence to the contrary which Christ virtually declared to be sufficient proof, but rather in the well substantiated fact which Easter commemorates.

How clear it is, that in this matter the Christ overwhelmingly desires that all men shall believe. Though silence may be sufficient, He breaks the silence to tell plainly of His Father's house, the many mansions, and the place prepared. Though Dives be reproved for the request that a messenger be sent from the spirit-world to convince his

wayward brethren of a resurrection, yet this very thing which Dives asked, our Lord Himself has done, coming unto us "from the dead," for the purpose of compelling if need be, man's belief in the resurrection. It was not necessary that Christ should return to earth. In His glorified body, He might have left the tomb and ascended at once to heaven, unobserved so far as the eye of man was concerned.

Christ did not do this. We may reverently say that He went far out of His way to give ample and convincing proof of His resurrection. He rose. He delayed for forty days His entrance into heaven. He tarried among men. He permitted Himself to be seen and touched. Why? Clearly it was because He considered belief in the resurrection to be so vital for men that He would not quit the earth until every doubt, reasonable or unreasonable, should be satisfied.

As a matter of fact, the importance, the far-reaching result, of faith in the resurrection must be apparent to serious-minded men. Who, without this sustaining power within, can nerve himself to face calmly either the stress of life or the shock of death?

Can we live as we ought, with doubt as to the resurrection? "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself." Unbelief as regards the resurrection is a chief source of bad living: "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." "Would you make men honest and pure and great? Then you must convince them of the dignity of their being; you must open before their eyes the vast prospects of the eternity which awaits them, in a Kingdom into which can enter nothing that defileth or maketh a lie."

Can we face the sorrows, the inevitable bereavements, of life, with doubt

as to the resurrection? Here especially may the world behold the uniform triumph of our Christian faith. Easter turns tears of sorrow into tears of expectant joy. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

Can we calmly face our own impending dissolution, with doubt as to the resurrection? Here again the Christian faith is absolute triumph. St. Paul, with the utmost cheerfulness, wrote concerning death to his Philippian children: "My desire is to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Christianity has softened even the very terms of expression, by which death is described. The Greek word which St. Paul here employs, translated "depart," was anciently used to indicate two interesting activities: sometimes to describe the breaking up of a camp, in order to move to higher and more ad-

vantageous position; at other times to describe the loosening of the cable when the ship sets sail upon her homeward voyage. Such is death to the Christian, upheld by his faith in the resurrection: not the direful calamity which the world pictures, but the breaking up of an earthly camp to be exchanged for the mansions of the Father's house: the loosening of the cable, for the soul's joyful voyage home.

"If it were not so, I would have told you." But we are not left to the testimony of our Lord's silence. Easter transforms the antecedently probable into absolute and accomplished fact. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

LXII.

EASTER AND GALILEE.

IT is within the range of most Christians' experience, to find that their outburst of Easter enthusiasm exhausts itself. Faith may not actually wane, but it loses its alertness. Devotion may not altogether vanish, but it sinks down a little, perhaps inevitably, and will need to be tended, nursed, revived, strengthened.

The apostles were dealt with by their Lord, with apparent expectation upon His part that they would greatly need His help and guidance, as they passed out from the excitement of the first Easter Day. The angel who had announced the resurrection in short eager sentences, "Come—see—go quickly—tell," added, with quiet deliberation, "Behold, He goeth before you into

Galilee; there shall ye see Him; lo, I have told you."

Our Lord's appearance to His apostles in Galilee carried the knowledge of His resurrection beyond the scene of its first disclosure, and typified the universal application of the Gospel of the Resurrection.

Not the Holy City alone, but Galilee as well! Christ was risen for the whole world. No one community, no one type of men, no single age in the march of humanity, was to be permitted to lay exclusive claim to the Risen Lord. He was to be everyone's Risen Lord, in desire at least. The angel's message, "before you into Galilee," sounded therefore a note of catholicity. A little later our Lord Himself made this even more explicit, when to the same apostles He said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Again, this appointment in Galilee tested the faith of the apostles. A three-days' journey: would they take the trouble; would the enthusiasm of their devotion hold out, now that the first impulse of their Easter joy had exhausted itself?

The transition for the apostles from Jerusalem to Galilee, how like for us the transition from Easter Day to the humbler Sundays which follow! "Before you into Galilee"; and many Christians, alas! reply with a shrunken devotion which has given the Sunday that follows Easter a name which we might well resent: Low Sunday!

Once again, amid the quiet scenes of Galilee, on the very spot where He had first called them, Christ sought to unfold to His apostles, if they would hearken, the full scope and the hidden power of the Easter fact. There they might learn from Him, concerning the resurrection, its message of absolution

for the fallen, its gift of help for those who seek deliverance from the power of sin, its dower of obligation upon the baptized to carry the tidings to the remotest regions, and to every soul for whom Christ died and rose again.

To unfold this, Christ drew His apostles to the quiet of their beloved Galilee, and to the seclusion in which meditation and reflection thrive. He could not adequately disclose it among the crowds that thronged the Holy City. "Before you into Galilee": how in ever way the message is for us. Blessed, indeed, are they who in the after-Easter days tarry faithfully and patiently with their Lord, to learn from Him His will concerning themselves, as disciples and heralds of the resurrection.

LXIII.

"SEEN OF JAMES."

THE week upon which we now enter brings the Holy Day, which commemorates two illustrious servants of our Lord, St. Philip and St. James.

St. James the Less, not to be confused with the son of Zebedee, to quote the words of Dr. Blunt, "was son of Alphaeus, or Cleophas, and of Mary, and nephew to Joseph the husband of the Blessed Virgin. Hence he was, in the genealogical phraseology of the Jews, a 'brother of our Lord.' It was also thought by the ancients that his mother Mary was cousin, or as the Hebrews would say 'sister,' to the Blessed Virgin, in which case there would be a double legal affinity between this saint and the holy Jesus. St. James the Less was well known to the Jews

as Apostle of the Church of Jerusalem, and from them he won the name of 'the Just.' He was the writer of the Catholic epistle of St. James, and went to his rest by martyrdom in Jerusalem, being thrown from a pinnacle or wing of the Temple."

How interesting the fact, that the Church so places in her calendar the Holy Day which bears the name of St. James the Less, that almost invariably it comes to us in the Easter-tide. The weighty reason for such arrangement lies in that circumstance of which St. Paul assures us; namely, that the Risen Lord granted a special manifestation of Himself to this apostolic saint. "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once. . . . After that He was seen of James."

We have record in Holy Scripture of what we may reverently call especial and personal concessions of our Lord, in the line of resurrection evidence. To

Mary of Magdala, because she loved much! To St. Peter, because he was heart-broken and needed absolution! To St. Thomas, because he doubted! To St. Paul, because he was a chosen vessel, to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles! But why to St. James?

One reason lies in the fact that St. James, like other kinsmen of our Lord, was probably slow to believe (St. John vii. 5). A halting faith, perhaps, followed him through Holy Week, and even into the Easter-tide. With this halting faith Christ dealt tenderly. There is an interesting tradition, quoted by St. Jerome. "James the Just had sworn that he would not eat bread from the hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord, until he should see Jesus again. And so, after His resurrection, our Lord appeared unto St. James and said: Bring hither a table and bread. And He took the bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to

James the Just, saying: Eat thy bread, my brother, for the Son of Man hath risen from among them that sleep."

Whatever the exact circumstance may have been, we may feel confident of the fact, that in the line of tender compassion the Risen Lord, solicitous for His kinsman, suffered Himself to be "seen of James." To him, as to St. Thomas, this probably was the Lord's appeal, "Be not faithless, but believing."

Also may it not have been that the Risen Lord granted this especial manifestation of Himself, in view of the fact that St. James the Less was to be particularly an apostle to the Jews?

An especial mission required an especial equipment. This man in Jerusalem was to be the foremost witness of the Risen Christ, among the very men who had brought Him to the cross. Over him there must be no shadow of doubt, touching this matter of the resur-

rection. We discern, therefore, a clear anxiety of our Lord on behalf of the men of His own nation, in the fact that "He was seen of James."

However regarded, this Easter-tide manifestation moves us to the conclusion, that our Blessed Lord intensely desires that all men everywhere shall believe that He rose from the dead.

LXIV.

PAST FORTY.

THE healing of the cripple at the gate of the temple called Beautiful—a man "above forty years old"—was indeed a mighty miracle. The attendant circumstances are communicated to us by St. Luke, who, being a physician, significantly dwells upon the mature age of the man as something which rendered a natural cure improbable.

Is it realized that defects, moral and spiritual as well as physical, so stereotype themselves in middle-life, that few people past the age of forty ever change for the better? Almost everyone does "look up" under final illness with its discipline of pain (thank God for this!), but from middle-life on to the

time when this discipline begins there is, generally speaking, no change, no marked improvement. Life rolls steadily on in the old rut. What it has become, it continues to be: "well favored and fatfleshed," or "ill favored and leanfleshed," as were Pharaoh's kine; "ringstraked, speckled, and grisled," perhaps, as was Laban's flock.

The point is that the quality of one's life does not ordinarily change after the age of forty. Character and conduct tend to fixity. The limitation which a man has placed upon his effort in the direction of righteousness becomes a yoke, and in most cases will be borne to the end rather than lifted and replaced with something better.

This incident at the gate of the temple called Beautiful, is a pathetic parable of human life: a marvellous achievement, because the man changed was "above forty years old." The people "were filled with wonder and amaze-

ment at that which had happened unto him."

In spite of reliable evidence to the contrary, many people are under the impression that time automatically exerts an uplifting influence upon human character. To put it a little differently, multitudes imagine that if a man cherishes the ambition to be great and good, he need only wait patiently for the arrival of middle life, when, as years creep on apace, change for the better will settle itself upon him irresistibly.

This is for the most part a delusion. In direct opposition to the trend of their previous conduct, men do not, in spite of themselves, become saints at forty. Generally speaking, they become more rooted and grounded in the kind of life they have followed: inert as regards the opportunity for change and betterment, paralyzed by prejudice, less and less open to new conviction, inaccessible to the fresh call to duty.

It requires a mighty effort, a stupendous reinforcement of the will, an avalanche of divine grace, to enable the average man of middle-life, whose relation to righteousness has been a dream rather than an actual experience, to do and to become what he has always expected to do and to become when "above forty years old." God's grace is sufficient; only it requires that grace in large measure. And yet let no earnest-minded man be discouraged, however great his difficulty. "The hand of the Lord is stretched out still."

The opportunity of early years—how great! The desirability in youth of establishing one's self promptly and firmly in the ways of Christian living—how manifest! The folly of deferring the struggle to win one's soul, until the sands of life are running low—how evident!

Shall not the Church with intense earnestness bear her Lord's message to

those who are still in the bloom and the flower of youth?

Can we forget the words of St. John: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one"?

LXV.

CHURCH AND HOME.

HOW greatly needed in all communities, at the present time, is St. Paul's conception of the Christian home, "the Church in the house"!

It is probably a fact, that between homes and families the numerical ratio is rapidly diminishing, especially in cities. It enters less and less into the plan of the newly-married, to establish for themselves a home, humble though it be. This is increasingly the way of life, says a Christian Bishop, "to be born in a maternity-home, to live in a boarding-house, to die in a hospital, and to be buried from an undertaking establishment." The old-fashioned home is to a great extent a thing of the past.

Even in the homes that remain there is little indeed of "the Church in the

house." Our young people marry, and some of them lose forthwith their contact with the Church. Such is particularly the case with daughters in Christian families, when they marry irreligious men, and lack the enterprise needed to maintain their spiritual life in the face of continual discouragement. Ordinarily the men do not change; but sometimes, alas! the women do, giving up in sheer despair the precious things of life, for the sake of a fancied domestic peace.

In society we find a shallow view of what it is to build up a home: much thought of bodily comfort; little consideration of the things that make for spiritual strength. The father is often, ordinarily perhaps, the provider merely, taking no part at all in the moral discipline and the religious development of his family. This is pitiful. And yet St. Paul counsels women who wish to know about religion, to "ask their hus-

bands at home." One wonders how much the women of to-day would learn about religion, if in this matter they were to take St. Paul seriously and follow his injunction.

Let it not be forgotten, that an irreligious home easily becomes a home in which wrong-doing prevails. If we have pagan homes, we must expect, sooner or later, to have in them an outbreak of pagan vice; for the only effectual barrier against evil is the religion which unites men to the Living God. If culture and art, luxury and prosperity, could preserve inviolate the sanctity of family-life, the Greek and the Roman civilizations would not have gone down in ruin.

God give us religious homes, a revival throughout this land of "the Church in the house"! That it may be so, the young must co-operate with their elders, sons and daughters with their parents. Let children therefore, in

these matters, be guided by those who love them best—we live in a headstrong age—let them, for their own sake and for the good of all, heed the great precept, "Obey, and be blest."

Let us seriously ponder these words of the late Bishop Coxe: "Is this a time to be half-hearted about religion and the home, 'the Church in the house'? I have traced the story of many examples of family misery, for which parents have only themselves to blame. They neglected family-prayers and the due observance of the Lord's Day; they starved the institutions of religion, and indulged the youthful appetite for mere amusement and wasteful excess; and then they groaned over the poor profligate boy or the wanton daughter, whom they had reared as if on purpose to 'bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'"

God give us again, everywhere throughout this land, Christian homes,

and "the Church in the house"; that righteousness may abound, to the glory of God, and the saving of the nation!

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